

Peace on the line as showdown looms over land grab

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — New land grabs by Israeli settlers are uniting Palestinians in what is threatening to snowball into a major showdown endangering the Middle East peace process.

Senior Palestinian figures have formed a National Committee to Confront Settlements and urged Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat to suspend autonomy talks with Israel.

They have declared next Tuesday "national anti-settlement day" and called for demonstrations at three hotspots on the occupied West Bank as a first move. "How can you have peace when they are taking people's land away?" asked committee member Hanan Ashrawi, former spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to peace talks.

"There can be no peace without the land, this is the fundamental issue," she told AFP.

Mr. Arafat himself has warned that Jewish settlement building will damage the peace process which was spurred by a government freeze on new construction in 1992.

The autonomy accords "forbid the continuation of the settlement policy, the confiscation of Palestinian land as well as the arrival of new settlers," he said.

Mr. Arafat accused Israel of "slowing down" the spread of autonomy and complained of the failure to hold elections in a self-rule council which were scheduled for last July.

He has appealed to the United States and to the United Nations to halt colonisation.

"The settlements are major sources of instability, friction and violence," Dr. Ashrawi said, noting that Palestinian protests have become a daily event.

"People in these areas know that the challenge is to be there on the spot to prevent the settlers from taking their land. Their livelihood and future is at stake."

"We hope there won't be any violence but the settlers are not known for pacifism. Violence is a fact of life here."

"There is no guarantee against individual acts of violence as we saw in the Hebron massacre," Dr. Ashrawi said, recalling the murder of more than 30 praying Muslims by a settler last February.

Settlers have openly declared a "land war" to expand West Bank strongholds and building new roads to block autonomy.

"We are fighting a real war for land against the Arabs and we will not back down," settler spokesman Aharon Dumh warned.

The Israeli army is readying to redeploy outside Palestinian towns and the more than 140,000 Jews in the territory fear for their lives.

They opened the offensive at the colony of Ephrat, south of Bethlehem, with the new year, and bulldozers have gone to work around several other settlements with more promised soon.

"These actions aim to consolidate our control over the land allocated to us by the state and to prevent Arabs from taking land from Israel," admitted Dumh, scoffing at Palestinian protests.

The PLO chairman is due to meet Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin this week and the Palestinians want the settlement issue at the top of the agenda.

"Arafat understands this is a question on which there is a very strong national consensus," Dr. Ashrawi said.

"There has to be a very firm political policy. Israel has been exploiting the position in order to create facts on the ground and to change the status quo."

While Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa has added his voice to the warnings of doom, his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres has tried to play down the crisis.

"There will be no more settlements," he said. "Israel is not going to confiscate land... to build settlements."

But the Palestinians noted he did not rule out confiscations to build roads and he did rule out the expansion of settlements on "government land."



YOUNG CITIZENS: His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday speaks with a young boy at a celebration held in Wadi Araba marking Arbor Day (see page one) (photo by Crystal)

Jordanians send relief aid to Chechnya

By Cathy King

SPECIAL TO THE JORDAN TIMES AMMAN — The first shipment of Jordanian aid to the war-wrecked Chechen Republic has been delivered to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and is expected to leave Amman today.

The donations of around 8.5 tonnes of medicine and baby milk have been collected by the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the Caucasian Chechen Republic (JCSCP) and other charities.

The collection has been gathered since the intervention of Russian military forces in the breakaway republic of Chechnya and the outbreak of war there on Dec. 11.

The aid will be shipped by the ICRC in Amsterdam, then to Stavropol in southern Russia and from there in trucks to Chechnya, the JCSCP chairman, and a former minister of public works, Said Bino, told the Jordan Times.

The use of ICRC channels in coordination with the Jordan Red Crescent Society to transport aid was arranged in December.

According to Mr. Bino, the ICRC is the only aid agency to have successfully distributed emergency supplies in Chechnya.

A statement from the ICRC delegation in Amman said that since mid-November the ICRC had provided 17 hospitals, including several in the Chechen capital of Grozny, with medical supplies to treat about 2,500 casualties.

The statement added that the ICRC had access to the whole of Chechnya except the centre of Grozny and that delegates of the all-Swiss agency had also distributed food and blankets to civilians "affected by the raging acts of violence."

The success of the Jordanian aid in reaching its destination, Mr. Bino said, will determine whether another shipment is dispatched.

"The ICRC has given us the names of hospitals to which they intend to deliver the aid," he said, adding that a Chechen in Moscow had telephoned to say that the Russian prime minister had promised the safe transportation of humanitarian aid to Chechnya.

Following appeals from the families of two Jordanian students of Chechen origin arrested recently by Russian authorities, the ICRC has said it would try to meet them, Mr. Bino said.

"We have given the students' full names to the

ICRC so that it can ask the Russians to meet with them" and verify their condition, he said.

The exact location where the two are held is not certain, he added.

With regard to 20 to 30 Jordanian Chechens held in Daghestan from where they apparently intended to travel to Jordan, Mr. Bino said that no more had been heard of their situation.

But he affirmed that Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Karim Kabariti had sent a memorandum to the Russian parliament inquiring about those stranded in Daghestan.

Russia has called upon several governments, including that of Jordan, to refrain from recruiting or transporting "mercenaries" to fight in Chechnya, a news agency dispatch quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigori Karasin as saying Sunday.

Mr. Bino asserted, however, that no Jordanians had left the Kingdom to join the battle in Chechnya.

"Jordanians of Chechen origin who have been studying there or those who returned to live there will obviously be involved in the fight for Chechnya," but no-one has left Jordan specifically to join the cause, he said.

AFP adds from Moscow: Russia has called on Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Jordan to stop the recruiting or transport of "mercenaries" to fight in Chechnya, Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigori Karasin said.

In a statement to the ITAR-TASS news agency, he said ambassadors of the five countries had been summoned and told of Russia's concern at reports of large numbers of "mercenaries" fighting for Chechen rebels against Russian forces.

Moscow called on Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to stop the recruiting of Afghan "mercenary" bands in Afghanistan and in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan, and to stop these bands from reaching the Russian border.

Mr. Karasin also asked Saudi Arabia and Jordan to stop the "illegal penetration" by their citizens into Russia to fight on the side of Chechnya, which is under attack by Russian forces trying to crush its secession from Moscow.

He said several dozen Jordanian and Afghan "mercenaries" had been captured by Russian forces in Chechnya on January 2.

Moscow also alleges that about 80 Lithuanians are fighting for the Chechens, along with about 50 Ukrainian nationalists.

Inter-faith team urges Vatican influence to solve Jerusalem dispute

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Christian and Muslim clergymen from Jordan and other countries have urged the Vatican to use its spiritual influence to protect minorities in Jerusalem and speed up Arab-Israeli negotiations over the final status of the Holy City.

The clergymen, members of a Muslim-Christian delegation which just concluded a three-day visit to the Vatican, voiced their concern over the Judaisation of Arab Jerusalem and said Arab Jerusalem should not be internationalised but be restored to Arab sovereignty.

"We underlined the special need to hasten talks on the final status of Jerusalem," said Rafe' Nijim, a member of the inter-faith delegation which met with the Pope John Paul II as well as the foreign ministers of the Vatican and Italy. "Otherwise Jerusalem will be completely Judaised."

At present, 155,000 Jews and 152,000 Arabs live in East Jerusalem. In 1918 there were only 10,000 Jews in all Jerusalem while there were 30,000 Arabs. In 1948 the number of Jews was 100,000 in West Jerusalem and the number of Arabs was 140,000 in East Jerusalem.

"In a couple of years the number of Jews in East Jerusalem will double that of the Arabs," said Mr. Nijim, also a member of the Ministry of Awqaf's Committee for the Restoration of the Holy Places.

Mr. Nijim stressed the need to enhance Christian-Islamic dialogue as a means to ensure the religious rights of Christian and Muslim minorities in Jerusalem.

"Political discourse proved to be weak," Mr. Nijim said.

"It didn't succeed and didn't restore us our rights. We have to concentrate on religious discourse."

However, Mr. Nijim said there should be a unified Islamic discourse as a first step for a strong Muslim-Christian dialogue. Jews should also be invited to participate to reach an equitable solution to Jerusalem.

The delegation submitted a memorandum to the Vatican, stressing the need for protection of Muslim minorities all over the world, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chechnya. It also dealt with religious minorities and persecution facing them.

Muslim minorities should be protected in Europe and abroad since Christians and other religious minorities are protected in the Muslim and Arab worlds," Mr. Nijim said.

Senator Kamel Sharif, who headed the 12-member delegation that included representatives of Egypt and Senegal, said enhancing Christian-Islamic dialogue was not easy. According to the senator, there are still obstacles facing Christian-Muslim movements.

"The ungrains of Christianity and Judaism are very close," Mr. Sharif said. "We should not forget that Christians and Jews are not divided over a conflict as it is the case between Muslims and Jews in Palestine."

But, he said, the door should be open for a dialogue between Arabs and Jews.

"If Israel showed good intentions for peace, especially in what concerns Jerusalem, then the road is open for dialogue, especially that Islam recognises Judaism as a religion and Arabs and Jews have lived side by side over several periods of time," said Mr. Sharif.

Settlers ban American diplomats from colonies

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli settlers called Sunday for officials from the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem to be barred from all settlements, branding them as "spies."

The council for the 144 Jewish settlements on the occupied West Bank and autonomous Gaza Strip said any U.S. consulate representative charged with monitoring the spread of settlements should be turned away.

"We have to ban these spies from entering our areas, but without resorting to violence," the council wrote.

It also said any Palestinians accompanying the diplomats whether they were drivers or technical advisors should be held for as long as possible.

The U.S. consulate provides Washington with regular reports on the colonies after Israel pledged in November 1992 to freeze settlement building, except for around Jerusalem, and agreed not to build any new ones.

Funding supplied by Israel for settlement building work is directly deducted from U.S. loan guarantees. Diplomats said the deductions had reached more than \$200 million for the financial year 1994-1995. The issue has been thrust back into the spotlight with settlers pledging "a land war" to expand their West Bank communities, and the Palestinians warning it could endanger the peace process.

It is quite possible that the Israelis use this as a pretext to expand Kokhav Yaakov," he said.

"And anyway the long-term aim of confiscating land is to suffocate Al Bireh by stopping it from growing."

Trees planted
Duzens of Palestinians

planted trees Sunday on land confiscated by Israel for settlers on the West Bank. Operation "Tree Day" took place at five different sites across the territory where settlers have launched a land grab ahead of the redeployment of Israeli troops, which is under negotiation as part of the Palestinian autonomy accords.

On a hillside near the settlement of Kokhav Yaakov, Israeli soldiers took identity cards from numerous Palestinians and threatened not to return them unless they stopped planting saplings.

But there was no violence and most people just ignored the army.

"I came here with my father to stop the settlers taking our land," said seven-year-old Nasser Hussein.

"We have been planting peach trees since dawn," said one old man in traditional Arab dress.

The army seized several hundred hectares of land around Al Bireh in December, announcing that they were needed to build a road to enable settlers to avoid Palestinian areas.

However, the former mayor of Al Bireh, Saleh Abdul Jawad, doubted that the land would be used only for a road.

"It is quite possible that the Israelis use this as a pretext to expand Kokhav Yaakov," he said.

"And anyway the long-term aim of confiscating land is to suffocate Al Bireh by stopping it from growing."

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Pollution threatens Tehran with slow death

TEHRAN (AFP) — Pollution has reached alarming levels in Tehran and is threatening the Iranian capital's 10 million people with disease and a slow death.

Hundreds of thousands of automobiles spew out thousands of tonnes of toxic gases daily, leaving an almost permanent cloud over the capital that blocks the view of the Alburz mountains or the city centre.

Smog has blackened the marble and brick facades of buildings, endangered trees lining the streets, and is taking its toll on the people, causing different kinds of physical and psychological illnesses.

According to official estimates, each Tehranian inhales an average of half a gramme of lead per day.

Every day Tehran Radio urges pregnant women, the aged and those with heart

problems to stay at home to avoid exposing themselves to the large amount of toxic gas in the air.

After ignoring the problem for over a decade, authorities have begun to fight the pollution, allocating 300 billion rials (130 million dollars) for clean-air projects, according to the head of Iran's environmental protection agency, Hadi Manafi.

Tehran's influential mayor, Gholam-Hussein Karbaschi, has started his own campaign, organising tree-planting campaigns and lobbying to have old cars removed from the streets.

The municipality has also set up around 1,000 smog control centres throughout the city to ensure combustion systems conform to standards.

The mayor has also sought financial and technical assistance from foreign countries

in a bid to improve Tehran's air quality. Iran and Japan signed an agreement last October for joint cooperation in pollution control.

At a seminar which opened here on Thursday, environmentalists and health experts called for "urgent action" to deal with the health hazards of the pollution.

One expert warned that the intake of lead could mainly harm the brain and nervous system and cause breathing problems.

Another expert estimated that the level of hydrocarbons in the air in Tehran was 100 times more than the average in other metropolitan cities.

Many Tehranis had complained of breathing problems, lack of appetite, general fatigue and nervousness, he said warning that the pollution could be linked to premature deaths.

Seventy five per cent of the pollution comes from traffic in a city which has doubled in population since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Some 700,000 trucks, buses, cars and motorcycles each day belch daily around 3,000 tonnes of carbon monoxide, 450 tonnes of hydrocarbons, 120 tonnes of azote dioxide, 30 tonnes of sulfur oxide and two tonnes of lead, officials say.

Another 30 tonnes of various other chemicals are spewed into the air, according to official estimates.

The problem is aggravated by tens of thousands of old cars running on low-quality fuel and with poor combustion linked to the city's high altitude — between 1,000 and 1,700 metres (3,600 and 5,600 feet).

The city is situated on the slopes of the Alburz mountain range.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:00	Cocottes Minutes
17:30	Que Le Mieux Gagne
18:00	Revue D'Etoile
18:30	Le Monde Fantastique Des Enfants
19:00	News In French
19:15	Magazine Sportif
19:30	Black Beauty
20:00	Boogies Diner
20:30	Street Hawk
21:10	Shades of L.A.
22:00	News In English
22:30	Louisiana
PRAYER TIMES	
05:10	Fajr
06:12	(Sunrise) Duha
11:45	Dhuhr
14:34	'Asr
16:57	Maghreb
18:19	'Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifiyeh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 627285	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Sabina Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625250	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624523	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675091	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to drop with a chance of rainfall in the northern regions. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	4/12
Amman	10/20
Aqaba	3/15
Deserts	

JORDAN VALLEY	
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 16, Aqaba 22. Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 44 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Bassim Qaddumi	648633
Dr. Jum' Abu Dhiab	758348
Dr. Yusef Abdo	684916
Dr. Yusef Al Faqih	756988
Firas pharmacy	681912
Ferdows pharmacy	774336
Al Asma pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	625672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	649483
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Nairoukh pharmacy	625672
Najib pharmacy	847652
IRRID:	
Dr. Ali Al Oman	272032
Alquds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Ahmad Al Tariqi	90806
Khalil pharmacy	925417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630841
Civil Defence Emergency	630841
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	943402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hot Complaints	625800
Press Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897487
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repair	623101
Abdali Telephone Repair	661101
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussain Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/8
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn	64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mathas, J. Amman	636140
Pulcinella, Shmeisani	664171/6
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
Al-Masdar Hospital	545845
The Islamic, Abdali	667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali	661273/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	661648
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777103/5
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafich	775111/26
Army, Marfa	891811/15
Queen Alia Hospital	622435/5
Amal Hospital	674135
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)963323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)905560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)989990
IRRID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)273555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272775
The Al Nafes Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

12:35	Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)	
14:00	Huddahdi (YY)	
14:30	Kiev (AU)	
17:05	Rome (AZ)	
17:45	Paris (AF)	
18:15	Dubai (EK)	
23:10	London (BA)	
01:10	Amsterdam (KL)	

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)	
Flights	
(Terminal 1)	
06:05	Beirut (RJ)
07:05	Beirut (RJ)
16:45	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:00	London (RJ)
12:20	Frankfurt (RJ)
12:30	Paris (RJ)
19:45	Beirut, Dubai (RJ)
20:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:25	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:30	Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:40	Istanbul (TK)
08:40	Beirut (AE)
10:30	Cairo (WS)
13:30	
Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)	
14:00	Khartoum (SD)
15:00	Sanaa (RJ)
15:30	Khartoum (SD)
19:15	Dubai (EK)
02:20	Amsterdam (KL)
02:35	London (BA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman	8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus	
	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	
Arr. Amman	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
	5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700 / 400
Banana	680
Banana (Mulkammar)	620
Cabbage	200 / 120
Carrot	250 / 170
Cauliflower	130 / 60
Cucumbers (large)	180 / 100
Cucumbers (small)	400 / 250
Eggplant	300 / 200
Garlic	600 / 400
Grape Fruit	250 / 160
Lemon	270 / 160
Marrow (large)	120 / 80
Marrow (small)	300 / 200
Onion (green)	350 / 200
Onion (dry)	320 / 180
Orange	650 / 400
Pepper (hot)	540 / 300
Pepper (sweet)	520 / 300
Pepper (sweet)	350 / 200
Spinach	200 / 120
Tomato	300 / 180
Tomato	900 / 500
Spring Beans	300 / 200

Home News



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday participated in Arbor Day celebrations in Wadi Araba by planting a tree sapling (photo by George Crystal)

1994 work-related accidents kill 23, injure 13,695 — SSC

AMMAN (Petra) — On-the-job accidents caused the death of 23 people and injury to 13,695 others in 1994, according to the head of the Workers Health Safety Institute, Abdul Rahim Abdul Jabbar, who was quoted in figures reported to the Social Security Corporation (SSC).

Mr. Abdul Jabbar told the opening session of a two-day meeting organised by the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) Sunday that nearly 28 per cent of the total number of injuries occurred in the engineering, metal and electrical industries, and 17.6 per cent in the construction sector adding that nearly 60 per cent of the injuries were to the workers' limbs, particularly the hands and legs.

He said the figures indicate that workshops and factories lack safety and protective equipment for their employees and proper safety instructions for machinery and equipment used by their staff.

VTC Director General Ahmad Atwan opened the session, attended by representatives of 18 organisations.

Dr. Atwan said that Jordanian institutions are in need of trained and qualified personnel in occupational health safety matters to help reduce the number of injuries and losses which cost the country millions of dinars annually and suffering to workers and their families.

Dr. Atwan reviewed VTC's efforts to train and recruit workers in cooperation with various public and private organisations and employees in Jordan.

Participants to the two-day workshop on rescue operations in closed premises organised with assistance from Canada will discuss topics related to rescuing trapped workers, protection of employees working in dangerous areas, dealing with chemical and inflammable materials, protective equipment for workers and other relevant subjects.

Birth control workshop focuses on characteristics of Depo-Provera

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-day workshop on the use of a birth control drug, which has been approved by the Ministry of Health, Sunday started here under joint sponsorship by the ministry and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) at the University of Jordan.

According to the university the drug, Depo-Provera is administered to women every three months in a single injection dosage form.

A university statement said that 15 gynaecologists and obstetricians employed by the health ministry, the University of Jordan and the Jordanian Family Planning Society (JFPS) are attending the workshop to learn about the drug's characteristics.

Depo-Provera has been tested and used in the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries, and was found to be an effective, and comparatively safe birth control drug, according to the statement.

It said that the health ministry has approved and registered Depo-Provera, adding that it can only be dispensed by prescription and administered by a specialist.

Meanwhile, the Jordanian Family Planning Society Sunday announced that it was organising a workshop in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth next Wednesday in Amman.

The three-day workshop, which is to be attended by 42 youths from Jordanian universities and youth centres, will have as its theme: "Educating the Youth — the Wealth of the Nation."

In addition to health and sound family planning programmes, the workshop will address issues of concern to youth and related to socio-economic matters, youth problems and community affairs.

'Food in sufficient supply for Ramadan'

AMMAN (Petra) — Foodstuffs are in sufficient supply to meet the local market's requirements during Ramadan, and additional shipments of imported meat and vegetables are expected every week during the month of fasting which could start by January 31, according to Mustafa Khleifat, secretary general of the Ministry of Supply.

Mr. Khleifat Sunday told a meeting in his office that the ministry will tighten measures to ensure that food prices are within regulations. Often, prices rise sharply during Ramadan.

According to the ministry, there are 150,000 heads of live sheep in the country (with expected shipments of 45,000 heads per week) and the ministry warehouses have in stock about 87,000 tonnes of frozen meat and 5,000 of frozen fish.

The Military and Civil Service Consumer Markets are well-stocked, and the Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) has been asked to purchase additional quantities of onions and potatoes to meet market needs, Mr. Khleifat said at the meeting which was attended by consumer market directors and other concerned officials.

Industry chamber, Nablus commerce group sign agreement on information exchange

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Chamber of Commerce of Nablus, which also serves Jenin, Tul-karem and Qalqilyeh, has signed an agreement with the Amman Chamber of Industry on cooperation in exchange of information and participation of events organised by the Jordanian industrial community.

It was the second agreement signed by a delegation representing the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and headed by Muath Nabulsi, its president, with a Jordanian organisation in two days.

On Saturday the delegation signed an accord with the Amman Chamber of Commerce on promoting trade

and investments in Jordan and Palestine.

The accord between the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and the Amman Chamber of Industry was signed by Khalidoun Abu Hassan, president of the Chamber of Industry and Mr. Nabulsi on Sunday after a meeting held at the Amman chamber.

Under the agreement, the Amman Chamber of Industry would exchange information with the Nablus chamber, offer it results of market research and data, invite it to participate in local events organised by Jordanian industries, train personnel, and also provide it with details of the legal framework that guides the work of chambers of industry.

In addition, it will also help the Nablus chamber to expand its library and reference material.

The two bodies will hold periodic meetings and "keep each other updated about developments on both sides," said an official of the Amman Chamber of Industry.

The official said the accord cleared the way for the Nablus Chamber of Commerce to attend a three-day seminar being held in Amman next week on access to international markets under trade agreements and also to an industrial fair to be held here on the occasion of Jordan's Independence Day on May 25.

The Amman Chamber of Industry already held a training course for computer spe-

cialists from the Nablus chamber, the official said.

Nablus has a relatively developed base in the West Bank and has been a traditional source to the Jordanian market for vegetable oil, stones, soap, and agricultural produce.

The Amman Chamber of Industry signed a similar cooperation accord with the Palestinian Chamber of Commerce in Jerusalem last month. These agreements complement each other and raise the potential for Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation, Mr. Nabulsi said.

While the private sectors from both sides of the Jordan River are increasingly coming together to map out cooperation, the non-ratification yet of a broad accord on econo-

mic relations between Jordan and the Palestinian territories is widely seen as a serious impediment to realise many joint projects in the private sector.

The agreement, signed in January 1994 and amended in August, calls for strong relations between the public and private sectors of both sides and for concerted interaction in many areas.

According to sources, the amended draft accord remains unratified on the table of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who also heads the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The issue is expected to be discussed during an expected visit of Mr. Arafat to Jordan later this month.

Germany provides 3 cars to help PSD combat drug trafficking

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday took delivery of three new cars and equipment provided by the German government.

The delivery was part of a 15-year-old protocol signed between Jordan and Germany whereby Bonn has helped to provide for new equipment, including helicopters, cars, monitors, computers, telescopes, videos and other equipment used in combating drug trafficking.

The protocol also calls for the exchange of experts,

according to Colonel Nazih Shara'adeh, director of the department.

"This is part of the annual help from the German government to buy the equipment we need depending on the budget provided by the German government," Col. Shara'adeh told the Jordan Times.

"These supports are the result of our department's efforts to control drug trafficking which is appreciated by the German government," he added.

According to Col. Shara'adeh, Jordan is considered the defensive line in drug smuggling "since drugs are produced in neighbouring countries and are smuggled

into the country because of our geographic position."

Heinrich Reiners, German ambassador to Jordan, said that there has been a long and excellent relationship between Jordanian and the German police.

"We support the Jordanian police by training them here or in Germany, and sometimes German police come to Jordan and give lectures," Dr. Reiners told the Jordan Times.

According to Dr. Reiners, the protocol does not restrict the department to purchasing only German-made products and thus the delivery Sunday of three Japanese-made vehicles.



Public Security Department Director Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Udwan (right) and German Ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners (second right) Sunday inspect police monitoring equipment delivered to the Anti-Narcotics and Anti-Forgery Department

Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Udwan, who received the equipment from Mr. Reiners, said Jordan had made great strides in combating drug trafficking.

Seminar to tackle how exporters can meet world accord trade requirements

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A lack of full awareness of trade systems and an inability to meet demand have been the major factors that keep down the pace of Jordan's drive for export-led economic growth, says an international expert in trade.

While the shortages in production capacity to meet export orders cannot be addressed but through expanding facilities as possible under available resources, level of awareness of preferential trade accords could be used through detailed briefings and workshops, according to Stefano Inama, a U.N. expert on international trade.

Raising awareness "is what we intend to do" at a Jan. 22-24 seminar on Jordan's access to international

markets through the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), the Kingdom's trade accord with the European Union (EU) and mechanisms available under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Mr. Inama said.

According to Mr. Inama, a senior expert serving the Geneva-based United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Jordanian exporters would be able to take full advantage of the trade accords when armed with full knowledge "of the theoretical and practical aspects of applying the agreements."

The central theme of next week's seminar, organised by the Chamber of Industry in cooperation with UNCTAD and financed by the government of Italy, is precisely how Jordanian exporters could meet with the

requirements of trade under these accords.

Also reviewed at the seminar would be Jordanian-Italian trade relations in view of Rome's new concentrated approach within the context of a fresh European Union approach to achieving a better balance in economic relations with the Mediterranean region, which includes Jordan.

The EU approach to the Mediterranean region marks a shift away from Eastern European countries and comes in the wake of the breakthroughs in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

Among those scheduled to address the seminar are Chamber of Industry Chairman Khalidoun Abu Hassan, UNCTAD Coordinator Teruo Ujii, UNDP Representative Osman

Hashim, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, Italian Trade Ministry official F. Valentini, Chamber of Industry advisor Ali Dajani, Mr. Inama, Italian trade expert M. Saladini, European Commission official Jean-Pierre Picard, and U.S. trade representative official H.J. Rosenbaum.

"There are many aspects to the trade systems, including rules of origin and customs classifications," Mr. Inama told the Jordan Times in an interview. Once exporters know what regulations guide their exports and what requirements have to be met, then the process gets easier, he noted.

Jordan is one of the beneficiaries of the GSP under which developed countries offer customs duty-free treatment to imports from developing

countries under a set of prerequisites. The Kingdom has also signed a new trade accord with the European Union and is poised for a gradual entry to the WTO, which is expected to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) by 1997.

The seminar will seek to discuss the various aspects of these agreements and highlight how Jordanian exporters could consolidate their access to international markets through these accords, and what they could and should do to meet the requirements laid down under the accords.

"Once you know the rules, you can better apply the systems and take advantage of the preferential treatment that some of the importing countries are offering to your exports," Mr. Inama noted.

A roadside view of peace

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — How do the people of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel feel about the peace process? The new book of travel writer Bettina Selby will explore this issue from a new perspective — that of a woman travelling from Lebanon to Israel on bicycle.

Mrs. Selby, who holds a degree in history and world religions, harbours a long interest in the region historically known as Greater Syria, which she refers to as the Holy Land.

"But," the author said in an interview with the Jordan Times, "I did not think that I would ever write a book about this particular region, for it used to be too painful to be in an area so full of hostility."

It is the peace process which has made her want to write this book, which will

comprise the experience of earlier trips to the Middle East as well as her present two-month journey.

Mrs. Selby, who has done extensive research into the historical background of the present situation and has closely followed the peace process through all its stages, has been talking to a wide variety of people in all four countries, and is aware of the "official" as well as the "unofficial" view of peace.

In her opinion, cycling is the best way of exploring a country, for it allows the most immediate contact with the population.

She expects "to be considered a little strange, but people appreciate that you are making a special effort to see their country."

"Tourists who travel in cars remain distant, 'rich foreigners'. I'm a 'rich foreigner' too, but at least I sweat and look exhausted."



Bettina Selby
It breaks down barriers." Mrs. Selby spoke with fondness of her kind and

warm reception in Jordan, her present station.

Particularly memorable was the night she spent in Jerash: given that there are no hotels there, and seeing that there was no way she would reach Amman on her bike that evening, the tourist police built a bed for her in the tourist reception centre.

The author sees herself as following in the footsteps of the "British Victorian lady travellers."

Previous adventures on her bicycle have taken her from London to Jerusalem following the route of the Crusaders, 5,000 miles down the Nile into war-torn Sudan, from Karachi to Katmandu across the Himalaya mountains, and along the Niger to Timbuktu.

She has published books in English and German on all her trips.

WHAT'S GOING ON

SOUTH AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL

★ Film entitled "Have You Seen Drum Recently?" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILMS

★ Film (in French) entitled "Tirez Sur Le Pianiste" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

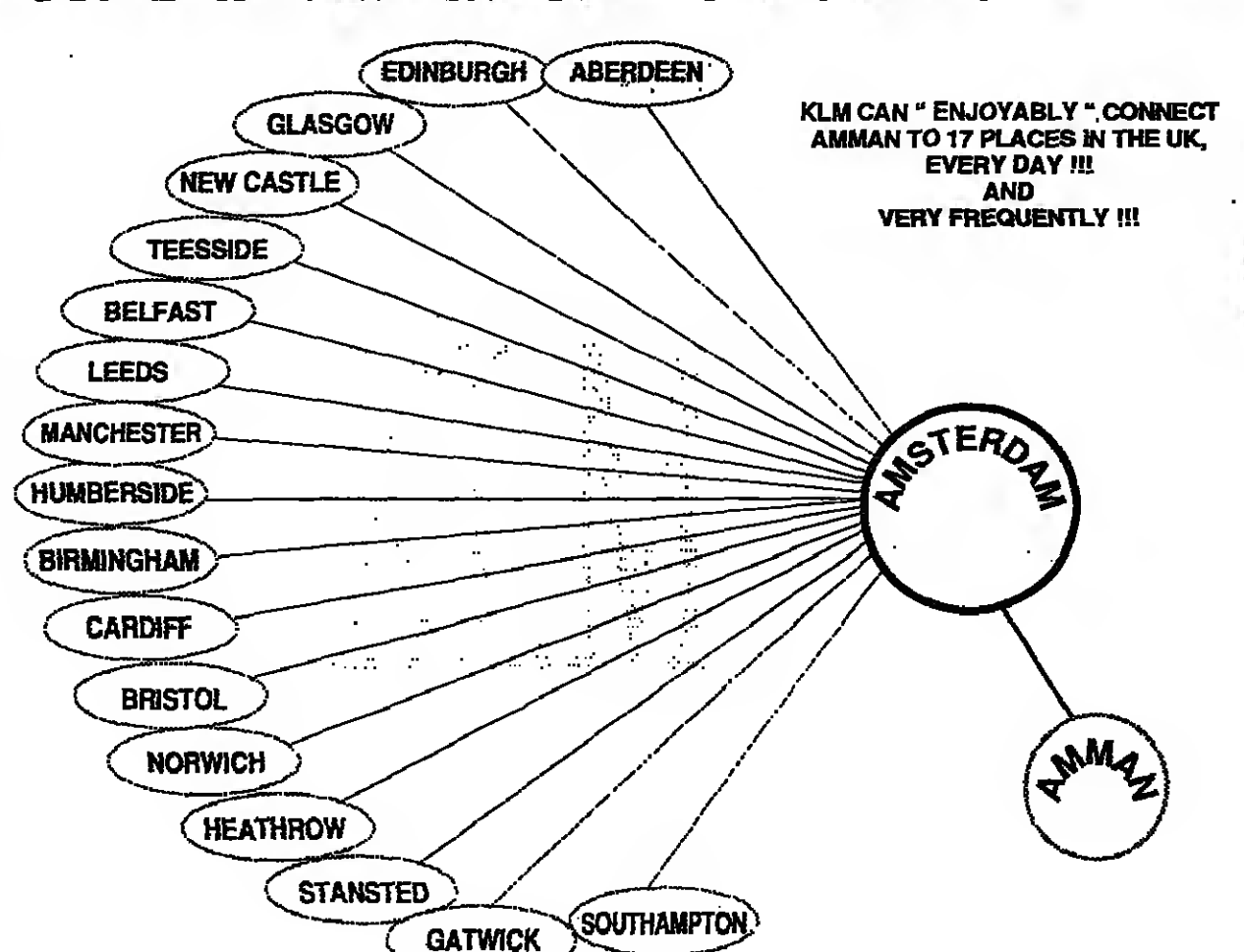
★ Film (in English) entitled "The Life of Leonardo Da Vinci" (Part II) (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Darat Al Fann at 5:30 p.m.

CONDOLENCES

The Chechen and North Caucasian community in Jordan mourns the death of the German journalist, Jochen Piest, in Chechnya.

The community extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to his family and to the German nation.

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Serbs refuse to open Sarajevo routes

SARAJEVO (R) — Roads in and out of Sarajevo remained closed Sunday despite a promise by the Bosnian Serbs that they would be opened as part of a ceasefire agreement, the United Nations said.

The U.N. planned to resume negotiations with a Serb liaison officer at the city's airport in pursuit of a compromise that would allow the routes to open.

"The routes to Sarajevo are still closed and it is not clear why," said U.N. spokesman Chris Gunness.

The Serbs had promised to allow the routes to open at 8 a.m. (0700 GMT) Sunday. U.N. spokesman Colonel Gary Coward said the United Nations had assured the Serbs that only humanitarian and civilian traffic would be allowed to pass.

If lower-level negotiations did not work, a United Nations delegation possibly led by the U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, would have to go to the Serb headquarters at Pale later in the day to take up the issue with

the Bosnian Serb leadership. "If the BSA (Bosnian Serb Army) is not prepared to come to some sort of arrangement, then this puts the current peace process in jeopardy. This needs to be resolved in the short term," Col. Coward told Reuters.

"It's surprising because we had every indication from the BSA that they wanted the cessation of hostilities agreement to work. This process is very delicate, needs to maintain a momentum. The routes issue has great symbolic meaning."

U.N. officials said Saturday Serb forces had threatened to fire on civilian traffic into Sarajevo in defiance of an accord signed by their own army command to open the aid routes to the city. Bosnian Serb leaders denied any threats had been made.

The Bosnian Serbs had refused to open the routes because they said the Muslim-led Bosnian government army had not withdrawn from a demilitarised zone near Sarajevo.

The opening of the supply routes was a condition of a new year four-month ceasefire agreed by Bosnia's main warring factions but many obstacles have developed in follow-up talks on implementing the provisions of the truce.

The United Nations says the truce is basically holding, with the exception of the Bihac enclave in northwestern Bosnia, where renegade Serbs and Muslims have not implemented the ceasefire.

Col. Coward said a mortar bomb that smashed into a bridge in Bihac town Saturday killed five people, one more than earlier reported, and wounded four.

He said the mortar was apparently fired in retaliation for a Bosnian army lightning assault out of the Bihac "safe area" hours before on the adjacent Klokot area despite the standing ceasefire between the war foes.

"We believe this was possibly in response to a Bosnian army assault on Klokot which is three kilometres from the edge of town and 1.2 kilometres outside the western edge of the safe area," he said.

"We think the assault was successful, so the mortar may have been fired into the town in response."

Col. Coward said the U.N.'s regional headquarters at Tuzla Airport in northern Bosnia as well as other U.N. bases in the area remained blockaded by Bosnian forces protesting at the presence of a Serb liaison officer under terms of the ceasefire.

Envoy from the big power contact group, trying to revive peace talks to end the 33-month war, Saturday ended four days of meetings with leaders of Bosnia's rival factions.

The envoys, representing Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States, briefed Croatian officials in Zagreb.

"We were informed about the progress in negotiations... unfortunately it seems that no concrete progress was made," Miroslav Zuzul, Croatia's U.N. ambassador, told reporters.

U.S.: No human rights progress in China

BEIJING (AFP) — China has failed to make any progress in key areas of human rights over the past year, Washington's top human rights official said here Sunday after more than two days of talks marked by deep-rooted disagreement.

During meetings with senior Chinese officials, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs John Shattuck said he had appealed on behalf of the Clinton administration for the release of several, high-profile political detainees, including the country's most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng.

"Over the last year, the human rights situation in China has not improved in areas of special concern to the American people," Mr. Shattuck said, citing "serious problems" affecting freedom of speech, association and religion.

"We have seen a number of restrictions and efforts to limit certain individuals from participating broadly in activities of internationally recognised freedom of speech and expression," Mr. Shattuck told reporters.

In talks with officials from the ministries of public security, health, family planning and justice, Mr. Shattuck said he had "strongly protested" the heavy sentences handed down last month to nine dissidents, as well as the systematic rounding up and detention of activists prior to foreign visits.

"There was plenty of disagreement," Mr. Shattuck said, adding that he also raised the issues of Tibet, access to prisoners, reports of transplant organs being taken from executed criminals, and a blacklist preventing overseas activists returning to China.

He gave no details of the Chinese responses, although he said both sides had described the meetings as "useful."

Mr. Shattuck said he had received no precise information regarding the current situation of the 44-year-old Wei, who was been held without charge at an undisclosed location since being picked up in April.

The Chinese authorities were incensed when Mr. Wei, who was released on parole in September 1993 after serving all but six months of a 15-year sentence for counter-revolutionary activities, met with Mr. Shattuck in February last year and called on Washington to take a hard line over human rights.

Mr. Shattuck also denied that President Bill Clinton's decision in June to delink human rights from renewal of China most-favoured-nation (MFN) trade status, could be blamed for the lack of human rights progress.

"If you look at the course of the entire year when these issues were at play, the events that were occurring in the first half of the year were similar to those that occurred in the second half," he said. At the same time, the secretary said some progress had been made in the area of legal reform, citing the new state compensation law allowing citizens to sue government officials.

Japan Socialist rebels struggle over party future

TOKYO (R) — The leader of a Socialist splinter group that threatens to undermine Japan's ruling coalition defended his movement Sunday against a barrage of criticism of its political timing and motives.

"It will be a kind of euthanasia for the Socialist Party if things continue as they are," Sadao Yamahana said on one of three national television talk shows on which he appeared.

"I think Prime Minister (Tomichi) Murayama shares the opinion that action must be taken to ensure the party's future," he said.

Mr. Yamahana, Mr. Murayama's immediate predecessor as Socialist chairman, has assembled 23 party lawmakers dissatisfied with the "unholy alliance" which their party formed with former foe the conservative Liberal Democratic Party last summer.

To maximise the party's chances of survival in future elections, Mr. Yamahana's group calls for recasting the Socialists as a centre-left alternative to the two large conservative parties that have emerged after two years of political turmoil.

The rebel leader and his allies, who call themselves the New Democratic League, took to the airwaves Sunday, just days before parliament is due to begin, to serve notice that they intend to form a new party as soon as possible — and to criticise the cautious approach of the prime minister and his mostly leftist backers.

Mr. Murayama and his group want to keep the 40-year-old party intact while it debates its future and pre-

pares for nationwide local polls in April. "Many in the party are paying lip service to the rebirth of the Socialist Party but in reality they're quite cosy with the status quo," said party rebel Hirotsuka Akamatsu.

The Socialists, who have governed since June in a coalition with the LDP and the small reformist group Sakigake, have shed their traditional left-wing policies in the interests of preserving the Murayama administration.

"These struggles at the party centre have badly damaged the credibility of local party chapters, which must fight the April polls," said Yoshiaki Mino, a lawmaker opposed to the rebels.

Hardliners on the party left have called for expelling the rebels and denying them a share of the publicly-funded subsidies which parties will receive under the electoral reform programme implemented last year.

The leftists, joined by the LDP, accuse Mr. Yamahana's group of working with the opposition New Frontier Party to topple the government before or soon after parliament convenes on Jan. 20 — a charge Mr. Yamahana denies.

The opposition has demanded that Mr. Murayama dissolve parliament and call fresh elections, a step he has refused to take and doesn't have to until mid-1997.

The rebels will Monday register themselves as a new parliamentary bloc, an intermediate step that falls short of leaving the Socialists and has triggered sharp public criticism of Mr. Yamahana's apparent lack of resolve.

S. Africa buries Joe Slovo

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Tens of thousands of mourners led by President Nelson Mandela Sunday buried veteran Communist Joe Slovo, the leading white figure in South Africa's struggle for racial equality.

At least 30,000 people crowded into Orlando Stadium in Soweto black township near Johannesburg to play their last respects to Slovo, who died on Jan. 6 after losing his battle with bone marrow cancer.

The 68-year-old Slovo was a close friend of Mr. Mandela and the most senior white in his government and a rare white hero to South Africa's black majority.

The former white government had vilified Slovo during his years in exile as public enemy number one for his role in the armed struggle waged by the now-ruling African National Congress (ANC).

Mourners from all over the country filed past the open coffin of the chairman of the South African Communist Party, which was draped in the new South African flag.

Mr. Mandela praised Mr. Slovo's role in South Africa's peaceful transition to democracy. "He knew when to compromise, yet he never compromised his principles," Mr. Mandela said. "He was a militant, who knew how to plan, assess concrete solutions and emerge with rational solutions to problems."

Mr. Mandela said the Lithuanian-born Slovo was "irreplaceable" and that it was tragedy that South Africa had lost a revolutionary who exhibited "humanity, pragmatism and industriousness."



INDIAN OIL WELL ABLAZE: Firefighters carry water pipes in an attempt to extinguish the blaze near an oil well which caught fire Sunday in the Southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. A million cubic metres of gas has been burning daily since the accident and U.S. firefighting firm Neil Adams has been called in to help quell the inferno which may take 6 days to put out (AFP photo)

U.S. to hand over Haiti mission to U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali Monday or Tuesday is expected to set the legal machinery in motion for the U.N. to take over the American-led Haiti operation by March 31, U.N. officials and diplomats said.

A report, prepared for him at the weekend by his special representative, Lakshmi Brahmi, is to certify that a "stable and secure environment" now exists in Haiti, a Security Council precondition for the U.N. mission in Haiti, known as UNMTH.

At the same time the Un-

ited States will formally notify the United Nations that conditions are ready for the handover from the U.S.-led multinational force that went to Haiti in October to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.

U.N. spokesman Joe Sills said Dr. Ghali's report would be released Monday or Tuesday after which the Security Council may take up to a week to authorise the operation. Diplomats said they expected the transfer to take about 60 days after the Council votes to draw up a U.N. force of about 6,000, nearly half of them expected to be

Americans.

The new U.N. force commander, named by both Mr. Ghali and the Pentagon late last week, is U.S. Major General Joseph Kinzler. Mr. Brahmi, a former Algerian foreign minister, will be the civilian chief of the operation.

Under congressional pressure, the Clinton administration wants the handover to take place as soon as possible but nervous U.N. officials, fearing a repeat of the chaos in Somalia after the bulk of U.S. troops pulled out, do not wish to rush the transition phase.

Christopher stays in charge at State

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Defying pundits who said he was on his way out, Secretary of State Warren Christopher has remained in place amid a partial cabinet shakeup halfway through President Bill Clinton's term.

Some analysts had suggested the 69-year-old Christopher had endured enough after two years of foreign policy crises; others said he was wanted to make a graceful exit after diplomatic successes in Haiti and North Korea.

"I'm just doing my job day in and day out, and I want to keep on doing that," he said in a recent television interview. "There's an agenda of issues that I want to carry forward."

While Mr. Clinton has revamped the White House staff and has had to find replacements to head treasury, defence, agriculture and the Central Intelligence Agency over the last year, Mr. Christopher stuck it out at the State Department despite frequent rumours that he is on his way out.

The rail-thin Christopher has had a tough act to follow, succeeding the more media savvy Republicans James Baker and Lawrence Eagleburger.

But appearances are deceptive. Despite his bland speaking style and stiff posture, Mr. Christopher is a veteran diplomat with wide experience.

As deputy secretary of state under President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), he helped negotiate the release of U.S. hostages in Tehran. In his current position, he has had to cope with an endless list of crises from Bosnia to Cuba to North Korea.

He swims or jogs every morning, and endures a marathon travel schedule for diplomatic missions that include tough negotiations with the likes of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and others.

Still, the mild-mannered North Dakota native who seems to get lost in his shirt collars suffers from an image problem. Even the guidance of Clinton aide and media guru David Gergen did little to help.

When a shirtless-cloak-clad Clinton cajoled U.S. troops in Kuwait last year, Mr. Christopher took off his jacket, but still appeared awkwardly uncomfortable in his stiff tie in the scorching 40-degrees centigrade (100-Fahrenheit) heat.

Jimmy Carter stole his thunder by negotiating a ceasefire in Haiti and Bosnia, and deputy Robert Gallocci was in the spotlight in negotiating a deal to freeze North Korea's nuclear energy programme suspected of weapons development.

The only area which he seems to be handling perso-

nally is the Middle East, but the crucial Israeli-Syrian discussions have been stalemated.

But Mr. Christopher seemed out of the spotlight even when Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed their historic accord in Washington.

One editorial cartoon published at the time of the Israel-PLO agreement showed Mr. Christopher on a barstool, saying to himself, "They wouldn't do it without me, naah..."

His critics describe him as a technocrat lacking vision and charisma. But with the Congress now dominated by Republicans, Mr. Christopher is an asset to the administration because of his long experience and relationships with lawmakers.

The soft-spoken Christopher will have his hands full with the new Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, who has vowed to focus on foreign policy.

But the two men have known each other and worked together for some 20 years, and few other Democrats have the experience that Mr. Christopher has in this arena.

"I think that Senator Helms and I will have a good personal relationship," Mr. Christopher said.

Plague of flying ants hits Peruvian Andes

LIMA (AFP) — A plague of flying ants has devoured pastures near the southeastern Andean city of Puno, and officials fear the insects could next attack crops, the state Environmental Health department said. The ants have also attacked children and livestock, leaving some badly bitten. Peasants have gathered in various townships to organise processions to counter what they believe is bad luck brought by the flying ants. The ants have been blamed for poor rains and low milk production by cows.

Russian police seize 40 kg of stolen diamonds

MOSCOW (R) — Police and counter-intelligence investigators have seized more than 40 kilograms of diamonds and arrested a group of people allegedly involved in illegal diamond sales, Interfax News Agency said. It quoted the investigation department of the Interior Ministry as saying the estimated value of diamonds was 17 billion rubles (\$4.5 million). The agency said the arrests completed an operation launched last year after a series of diamond and precious metals thefts from the Moscow-based scientific institute Ginzma-zoloto. Interfax quoted investigators as saying some of the stolen diamonds had been smuggled to Bulgaria. It gave no further details. Officials could not be reached for comment.

Bank robber confesses in Taiwan

TAIPEI (R) — A Taiwanese man detained by police in a routine patrol has confessed to stealing some \$3.8 million from two local banks last year, police said. Lin Ching-fa, 33, admitted he was the man who stole the money from two local banks last May and December, a Taipei police official told state television. "I did the two cases all by myself," Mr. Lin told television. Mr. Lin said he only got away with \$800,000 because he had to run off when his robbery was interrupted. Police recovered the money at his home. A police official told television he believed the man had other accomplices.

Singapore to have cheaper, speedier Family Court

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singaporeans will have a cheaper, speedier way of settling domestic disputes when a Family Court officially opens in March, the Sunday Times reported here. They can file a case with only one dollar (67 U.S. cents) and will not need expensive lawyers who could cost up to 3,000 dollars (\$2,000) a day to appear in a subordinate court. The court will deal with family disputes such as maintenance payments, adoption petitions, protection orders against spousal violence and child abuse. But divorce cases would still be heard in the High Court. The court was set up after complaints that lawyers' fees had soared beyond the reach of many.

Indonesia's birthrate halved since 1970

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's birthrate has been almost halved since 1970, according to a Central Statistics Agency (BPS) survey cited by Antara News Agency Friday. The 1994 survey, carried out between July and October and involving 35,510 respondents, showed that the birthrate had fallen from 5.6 per 1,000 population in the early 1970s to 2.9 two decades later. Antara News Agency reported. The BPS survey also found that the use of contraceptives had increased to 55 per cent in 1994 compared to 50 per cent when the last survey was taken in 1991. Since the formation of the National Family Planning Board in 1970 Indonesia's voluntary national family programme has reached the far flung villages of the archipelago promoting the idea of a small, happy and prosperous family using the slogan "two children is enough." State Minister for Population Affairs Haryono Suyono said the increasing age at which people got married was a contributing factor to the declining birthrate.

Plague of
killing ants hits
Peruvian Andes

LIMA (AFP) — A plague of killing ants has devastated the Peruvian Andes, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes. The ants, which are a type of army ant, are known for their voracious appetite for anything that moves. They have been found in large numbers in the mountains of Peru, where they have been causing significant damage to crops and livestock. The ants are also known to attack humans, and several people have been injured or killed by the insects. The government has declared a state of emergency in the affected areas and has ordered the evacuation of thousands of people. The ants are believed to have been introduced to the area by a group of people who were traveling through the mountains. The ants are now spreading rapidly, and it is feared that they will soon be found in other parts of the country.

Russian police
seize 40 kg of
colored diamonds

MOSCOW (R) — Police have seized 40 kilograms of colored diamonds in a raid on a jewelry store in Moscow. The diamonds, which were worth an estimated \$10 million, were found in a hidden compartment in the store's safe. The police said that the diamonds were stolen from a group of people who were traveling through the country. The group was believed to be involved in a large-scale smuggling operation. The police are now investigating the case and have arrested several people who are suspected of being involved in the theft. The diamonds are now being held by the police and are expected to be sold at a public auction.

Bank robber
infesses in
Tianwan

BEIJING (R) — A man who had been accused of robbing a bank in Tianwan, China, has confessed to the crime. The man, who was 35 years old, was arrested after a two-day chase. He was found hiding in a nearby field. The police said that the man had stolen a large sum of money from the bank. The money was used to buy a car and other items. The man is now being held in custody and is expected to be charged with the robbery. The police are also investigating the case and have arrested several other people who are suspected of being involved in the robbery.

Singapore to have
easier, speedier
family court

SINGAPORE (AFP) — The Singapore government has announced plans to reform the family court system. The reforms are expected to make the court system more efficient and to reduce the time it takes to resolve family disputes. The government has said that the reforms will include the creation of a new family court, which will be responsible for dealing with all family law cases. The new court is expected to be established by the end of the year. The reforms are also expected to include the introduction of new procedures for dealing with family disputes, such as mediation and arbitration. The government has said that the reforms are necessary to ensure that the family court system is able to deal with the increasing number of family law cases that are being filed each year.

Indonesia's
rate halved
since 1970

ANTARA (AFP) — The rate of infant mortality in Indonesia has been halved since 1970, according to a report by the United Nations. The report, which was released last week, said that the rate of infant mortality in Indonesia had fallen from 100 per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 50 per 1,000 live births in 1990. The report also said that the rate of infant mortality in Indonesia had fallen from 150 per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 75 per 1,000 live births in 1990. The report is a significant achievement for Indonesia, as it shows that the country has made significant progress in improving the health of its population. The report also highlights the need for continued efforts to improve the health of the population, particularly in the areas of maternal and child health.



A Chechen fighter shoots as his comrades run for cover during fightings in the Chechen capital of Grozny (AFP photo)

Italy's Dini opts for slimline team of technocrats

ROME (AFP) — Lamberto Dini, set to take over as Italy's new prime minister, held informal talks with non-party technocrats in his Treasury Ministry office Sunday in a bid to put in place a new government by the middle of the week. Dini, a 63-year-old financial expert and former head of the Italian Central Bank, said he would seek to form a cabinet made up of "people independent of political parties" in order to "defuse the political atmosphere" and concentrate on resolving Italy's chronic financial difficulties. Analysts believed Mr. Dini was likely to retain the treasury portfolio and create a "super-ministry" combining the budget and finance departments that would set about reducing Italy's huge public debt, currently equivalent to 120 per cent of gross domestic product. There was doubt that he would succeed in forming his team in the time he has set himself. The only political personalities he has met since embarking on consultations, under-secretary of state in the prime minister's office Gianni Letta and the minister for relations with parliament Giuliano Ferrara, are members of Mr. Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, suggesting a degree of continuity between the incoming and outgoing administrations. Mr. Dini, a conservative with views relatively close to those of Forza Italia, has given no indication of the course his consultations have taken. The Northern League, whose defection from the ruling coalition last month was instrumental in Mr. Berlusconi's fall from power, immediately declared its opposition to the prospect of Mr. Letta retaining his post in the new government. "In a government of technocrats above the parties, Letta would obviously be there to see to the carrying out of Berlusconi policies," its spokesman, Luigi Rossi, said. Mr. Berlusconi was maintaining his opposition to Mr. Scalfaro's decision to appoint a new prime minister rather than call new elections, and on Saturday sent a video cassette to Italy's television stations — of which he owns three — to set out the achievements of his seven months in office. "Only a rapid return to the polls will restore life to a coalition government capable of ensuring stability," he told a press conference Friday after moving finally out of the prime minister's office at the Chigi Palace. He said he planned in the coming days to form a "broad alliance of moderate, free-market, Catholic, federal and social and European conservative forces." The secretary of the (formerly Christian Democrat) Popular Party, Rocco Buttiglione, appeared to hold out the prospect of an alliance with Mr. Berlusconi in an interview in the daily Corriere della Sera Sunday in which he suggested the formation of a moderate centre grouping that could include Forza Italia. Mr. Buttiglione, who had formed part of the parliamentary opposition to Berlusconi, said he had written to the media magnate congratulating him on stepping down and proposing the creation of a "new moderate pole" in Italian political life.

Army patrol ends as N. Irish peace holds

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland's predominantly Protestant police force Sunday ended a 30-day patrol of the city's Catholic areas, a sign that the peace process is holding. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) said it was safe to end the patrol, which was the first since the city was divided into Protestant and Catholic areas in 1969. The RUC said that the patrol was necessary because of the threat of violence from the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The IRA has been fighting for the reunification of Ireland, and has been responsible for many deaths and injuries in Northern Ireland. The RUC has been accused of being biased against Catholics, and has been the subject of many protests. The end of the patrol is a significant step towards peace in Northern Ireland. The RUC has said that it will continue to monitor the situation in the city, but that it does not expect any further violence. The Catholic community has welcomed the end of the patrol, and has said that it is confident that the peace process will succeed. The Protestant community has also welcomed the end of the patrol, and has said that it is confident that the peace process will succeed.

Arson suspected in deadly Australia blaze

SYDNEY (R) — An apartment fire which killed eight people in a Sydney suburb early Sunday was being treated as suspicious, Australian police said. The blaze completely destroyed a three-floor apartment in the south-western suburb of Liverpool in what a fireman at the scene described as one of the hottest blazes he had ever battled. Police said a pregnant woman and a number of children were believed to be among the victims, thought to be members of a family attending a reunion. But they had not yet positively identified the badly burnt bodies. Police said the blaze was being treated as suspicious until a cause was established. Neighbours of the family told reporters they had little doubt the blaze was the result of arson. One said he called the fire brigade and reached the scene moments later. "What amazed me most was that there wasn't a scream or a call for help. There wasn't a single sound," he said. "It looked to me like someone soaked the house (with fuel) and soaked the staircase then set fire to it. The staircase was alight from the bottom up."

Pope ends Philippine visit with biggest-ever crowd

MANILA (R) — Pope John Paul II wrapped up a triumphant visit to the Philippines Sunday by drawing the biggest crowd of his 17-year reign and rejuvenating a papacy some people feared was going into decline. Vatican officials said it was the biggest turnout yet for the Pope, beating even the welcome he received when he returned to his native Poland for the first time as Pontiff in 1979. After a smaller than expected crowd at his first big public mass Saturday, Sunday's climax of World Youth Day was a stunning explosion of Filipino Catholic faith. Rizal Park in the middle of Manila was jammed to bursting and all the roads to the apostolic nunciature were so crammed with people hoping for a glimpse of the Pope he had to abandon plans to drive to the Youth Day mass. People perched atop vehicles, traffic lights and anywhere offering a vantage point to catch a glimpse of leader of the world's some 900 million Roman Catholics were disappointed. Instead he was flown the three kilometres by helicopter to emerge on a high stage to the adulation of foreign and Filipino youth delegates along with millions of local people. The 74-year-old Pope, forced to cancel foreign tours to the United States and Belgium last year after undergoing bone replacement surgery, was clearly delighted with his reception on the first stage of his four-nation tour. He leaves Monday for Papua New Guinea, before going on to Australia and Sri Lanka. "He is delighted," said chief Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls who estimated Sunday's crowd at four million. "It is his first trip in such a long time and he has found this kind of reception. This was clearly a boost for him." The Pope even turned the silver topped black cane he now uses to help walk into a stage prop during the visit, waving it enthusiastically at the crowds. He entertained hundreds of thousands of people at a youth vigil Saturday night by twirling like Charlie Chaplin. Although the Pope looked very tired and lost in thought as he arrived for a Sunday evening meeting with Asian bishops, aides his Manila reception was just what he needed to help get through the loss of his former active lifestyle. "That kind of change is difficult psychologically and this trip has helped him come to peace with himself about this new phase in his life," the aide added. "It has recharged his batteries." Behind the adulation, however, there were serious messages for the people of the Philippines, Asia's only Catholic majority nation, and for the region's church hierarchy. There was also a diplomatic success in getting a delegation from China's breakaway Catholic Church to join him in prayer for the first time at the Youth Day mass. The mass was the clearest indication yet that China's state-sponsored church, which obeys the Chinese government instead of the Pope, was inching closer to Rome. The Pontiff stepped into a conflict between the Philippine Church and the government of President Fidel Ramos over state promotion of birth control by bluntly telling his bishops they must resist all encroachments on his conservative doctrine. "Because the church treasures the divine gifts of human life and its inalienable dignity, she cannot but strenuously oppose all measures which are in any way directed at promoting abortion, sterilisation and also contraception," he told a private meeting of Philippine bishops. Despite professing respect for the other great religions of Asia, he also left the leaders of his church in no doubt their job is to go out spread their faith throughout the region.

Chechenya crisis threatens
Yeltsin's survival as leader

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has lost much of his remaining popularity over the bloody intervention in Chechenya, which threatens his very survival as head of state, diplomats here said. After the fall of Grozny, he will urgently have to revamp existing power structures if he wants to hold on to the presidency. Moscow's handling of the crisis "has shown up the absence of a coordinating centre for decision-making. The power structures are vague and not cohesive," a Western diplomat commented. Around the head of state several decision-making bodies gravitate, relatively independent of each other and there is no established hierarchy. These include the ministries of the interior and defence, the counter-espionage service and Security Council and a few autonomous personalities like Alexander Korjakov, head of the Presidential Guard. As a result orders that are given are not carried out and the declaration of officials contradict one another. The Russian president has recognised the danger. "The Kremlin is trying to redefine its political strategy and is looking into ways of reforming power structures," one diplomat said. In the past few days, Mr. Yeltsin's political advisors — who had not had access to him since the outbreak of the Chechenya crisis on Dec. 11 — have won back the ear of the president and are speaking once more in his name. In addition, the Kremlin is tackling the power structures of the military, in which refusal to carry out orders has been a major destabilising factor. Hence the idea launched last week of putting the chief of staff under the direct authority of the president. The Defence Ministry, remodelled on U.S. lines, would no longer have responsibility for administering the armed forces and the command structure would be the chief of staff, explained Sergei Satarov, Mr. Yeltsin's political advisor. It would be a discreet way of sidelining the hardline Defence Minister Pavel Grachev. The Kremlin envisages "a complex movement of personnel to put back order into the armed forces after a long period of open debate," a well-informed Western source said. Meanwhile the public prosecutor's department met Saturday to consider what to do about officials who have refused to carry out the orders of the military high command, the Interfax News Agency reported, quoting the spokesman for the president's office, Sergei Nosovets. A restructuring of the high command in Moscow is not the only problem facing the Russian president. The situation on the ground in Chechenya is virtually an impasse: if he stays he could get bogged down, if he pulls out he could be ousted. "The battle for Grozny will not be over when the bunker of the presidential palace has been taken. The Russian flag floating over the building will not be a sign of capitulation and a return to constitutional order in Chechenya. Even the death of (Chechen self-styled President) Dzhokhar Dudayev will not bring the republic to its knees," Dmitri Ukhlin, the weekly Moscow News' political commentator said Friday. After the fall of the secessionist republic's capital, "Russian forces will have to stay in Chechenya." Their pull-out would be an admission of weakness, the Caucasian part of Russia would split up into pieces and Boris Yeltsin would immediately be toppled, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai predicted. But Mr. Yeltsin could still survive as no political figure of any stature has risen up to replace him and there is nobody today to play the role he played himself in August 1991. The Chechenya conflict has thrown a spotlight on the impotence of the new Russian parliament to influence Kremlin policy in times of crisis. But deputies are tentatively stirring to try to claw back some powers from President Yeltsin. The question is: How can this be done without provoking a major showdown with the Kremlin leader who dissolved the previous parliament with army tanks? Lacking both the spirit and the legal authority to put a brake on Mr. Yeltsin, parliamentary deputies in both houses have been helpless to stop the bloody advance of the Russian troops on Grozny. But groups at both ends of the political spectrum appear now to feel that the constitution should be amended to redress an imbalance in the powers of the legislative and executive branches. "Yes, we feel helpless. The Duma has demonstrated its impotence," Viktor Sheinits, a prominent liberal deputy from the reformist Yabloko faction, told Reuters. "We need to amend the constitution to enable the Duma (lower house) to speak and to make its voice heard." Gennady Zyuganov, head of the strong Communist faction and party, echoed the views of his political opponent. "During the Chechen crisis it has become especially clear that the Duma has no rights, that it is only a small barrier on the path of the president," he told Reuters. "We will end up with dictatorship, instead of democracy, if we do not amend the constitution." The only faction, which backs the Kremlin's handling of the Chechen crisis is that of ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy — a factor which underlines Mr. Yeltsin's isolation. The new Russian constitution adopted on Dec. 12, 1993, the same day the Duma was elected, gave the president expanded powers at the expense of the legislature. The shift, Mr. Yeltsin argued at the time, was needed to prevent a power struggle between the president and the parliament which could hinder democratic reforms.

American
guide killed
in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — An American woman tourist and her Cambodian tour guide were killed Sunday when their vehicle came under gunfire in Cambodia's northwest, the information minister said. The woman's husband, also American, was injured when the party were shot at 20 kilometres north of the provincial town of Slem Reap on the road to Banteay Srei Temple, Leng Mouly told AFP. The minister said he had been evacuated to Phnom Penh for medical care and his condition was described as stable, the minister said, adding that the couple were tourists. The U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh said it could not give out their names because of U.S. privacy laws. "The circumstances of the incident are unclear at this time, but the Cambodian government has given every assurance it will move quickly to thoroughly investigate and bring the criminals to justice," U.S. diplomat Dave Miller told AFP. Government officials said they did not know whether the attackers were Khmer Rouge guerrillas, who control large pockets of the country, or rural bandits. But a senior military official in northwestern Siem Reap province told AFP by phone initial investigations suggested the attack was a case of banditry. "The investigation is still going on, but I don't think it was the Khmer Rouge because there are no Khmer Rouge in this area," said the official on condition of anonymity. Siem Reap is home to the 12th century Angkor Wat Temple complex, Cambodia's main tourist attraction. But Khmer Rouge violence and the killing of several Western tourists last year, as well as rural banditry, has deterred tourists. Automatic weapons are easy to buy in Cambodia and banditry is rife in many rural areas, often involving unpaid, undisciplined but well-armed soldiers and policemen. "I think the incident is an internal problem, possibly it is one of the security forces in the area in a hold-up or extortion that went wrong," the senior military official from Siem Reap said. Government officials in Phnom Penh were trying to play down the severity of the incident for the sake of the country's already troubled tourist industry. Meanwhile Cambodian Co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh arrived here Sunday for top-level talks aimed at resolving prickly issues including border disputes and immigration.

54 rescued after boat sinks in India

CALCUTTA (R) — Indian authorities said 54 people had been rescued and no bodies found Sunday when a boat carrying Hindu pilgrims at the mouth of the Ganges River capsized. Government officials at Sagar Island south of Calcutta told Reuters by telephone that crew had said between 50 and 60 people boarded the launch, which tipped over at about 10:30 a.m. (0500 GMT). Rescue operations were continuing, and it was still not clear whether anyone had drowned. Earlier, United News of India (UNI) reported that dozens of pilgrims were feared drowned. UNI said the boat was carrying about 100 passengers who had come to Sagar Island to bathe in the holy river in a ritual which Hindus believe washes away their sins. Officials told UNI about 33 pilgrims had been rescued. Exactly one year earlier more than 60 people drowned when two pilgrim boats collided in the Bay of Bengal and one was torn in half. A Hindu festival during which tens of millions of people "take sacred baths" — the Gauges begao Saturday. Overcrowding is a perennial problem during the festival when there is a huge demand for places on boats which shuttle pilgrims to bathing spots.

A woman digs out a storm drain in front of her beachfront home in Malibu in preparation for renewed rain storms expected to hit California. Record rains have caused major damage due to flooding and mudslides (AFP photo)

Weekend fires in U.S. claim 17 lives

BURBANK, Illinois (AFP) — Six children and their 62-year-old father died Saturday when fire raced through their split-level home in suburban Chicago, authorities said. Two other fires in the Midwest left eight other children and two other adults dead. In Burbank, the seven victims were pulled from the house alive but succumbed later to smoke inhalation, said fire officials. The children ranged in age from three to 16. A woman who was nine months pregnant escaped and called for help. Another woman survived after being pulled out by neighbours. "All we know is it started in the front room, and — from the neighbours — there was a big explosion," said Fire Chief Martin Kreil. "It was probably the windows blowing out." In Moorhead, Minnesota, a woman and six children aged two to 10 died in a fire in their three-bedroom apartment. Fire officials said they had moved to the apartment after a blaze at their home in another part of town. In Columbus, Ohio, three family members, including two children, perished in an early morning blaze. Fire officials said four other children escaped, including one who jumped from a second-floor window. Meanwhile more rain fell on parts of flood-soaked California Saturday, but forecasters said the worst was over — at least for now. Amid the cleanup, residents queued up for tetanus shots and free food in Guerneville, north of San Francisco, while the National Guard sent patrols in motorboats along overflowing rivers. Flooding over the last week has caused at least 11 deaths and \$300 million in property damage in the most populous U.S. state. President Bill Clinton, who declared 24 of the state's 58 counties disaster areas, said the government was doing everything possible to provide relief. "I pledge to you that the American people will stand by you in this time of crisis as they have in the past," Mr. Clinton said. Flood and mudslide warnings were lifted in northern California, except along the Russia River. But residents in many areas were advised to boil drinking water because of possible contamination. In the southern part of the state, officials closed Newport Bay Friday after discovering a sewage leak that may have spilled as much as eight million litres (two million gallons) of raw sewage. Roads remained closed in many areas of the state. The National Weather Service said the unusual pattern of wet weather could continue through the next week, possibly with some heavy downfalls. "It is possible, as the week progresses that we could get another system that could produce more flooding," said Weather Service hydrologist Tracy Cox. Venture County lost some \$22.7 million worth of produce and Orange County lost between 50 and 80 per cent of its strawberry crop, according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture.



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Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

The 1996 race for the White House has already begun

THE 1996 election for the White House has already begun. During the past few weeks leading Republicans have officially announced the formation of committees to explore the feasibility of their presidential aspirations.

The most significant factors that have led to this early start to the presidential campaigns are the Republicans' euphoria over their national victory in November of last year and the fact that they continue to see the sitting Democratic president, Bill Clinton, as politically vulnerable.

Yet despite negative polls, it is far too early to call Mr. Clinton a one-term president or to predict an easy Republican victory. A realistic assessment of U.S. politics makes it clear that the conditions are quite volatile; and such an assessment must begin with the situation facing the president.

The November elections solidified a pattern that has been evolving in American politics over the last 30 years: a movement of white (especially southern whites) male voters away from the Democratic party and a deep voter alienation from and anger at government. In presidential elections, this trend has led pollsters to observe that the Republicans had an "electoral lock" on the southern states, and the most recent election saw the phenomenon move down into the grass roots at the congressional level.

Compounding the president's problems as a Democrat are a number of issues that have eroded public confidence in his personal leadership. His personal waffling on issues; his unique personal problems (which will continue to be played out in the courts, in congressional hearings and in the press during the next two years); the extraordinary and, at times, embarrassing and insulting hostility of popular television comedians, popular right-wing talk show hosts, and leading commentators in the mainstream press — all have contributed to making the presidential tenure of Bill Clinton a difficult one.

Roughly 40 per cent of the Americans still support the president (about as many as those who voted for him), but the rest have attitudes, described by one leading analyst as ranging from "disappointed and frustrated to hostility and contempt." There is a striking lack of civility in our political discourse: Nixon and Carter and Bush have been victims of it. Now Clinton is, too.

Additionally, the president faces deep divisions within his own party. As he moves towards the centre of American political spectrum on one issue, the liberal left publicly challenges him for abandoning the "traditional base of Democratic party." And as he moves again towards that base on other issues, the more conservative members of the party attack him by calling him a "minority, special-interest politician." These attacks, not to mention countless attacks from Republican sources over the past two years, have stuck in the minds of voters, reinforcing the image of a "waffling" president.

Yet a recent poll showed the president's popularity higher than it's been since the 1994 election, higher than that of Congress (the president had a 47 per cent approval rating to 31 per cent for Congress). Mr. Clinton's positive rating was also found to be higher than that of the leading Republicans, Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich. But the same poll found reported that almost two-thirds of all Americans predicted that Mr. Clinton will lose when he runs for reelection in 1996.

It is this high negative response that has contributed to six Republicans announcing the presidential exploratory committees this month. But the road to '96 will be a bumpy one for the Republicans as well.

The Republicans who have tossed their hats into the ring so far are: Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas; Texas Senator Phil Gramm; Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania; former treasury secretary and former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander; CNN talk show host Pat Buchanan; and Alan Keyes of Maryland who was an appointee in the Reagan State Department. To those names

may soon be added those of former vice president Dan Quayle and former secretary of housing Jack Kemp. There may yet be more (at least four other Republicans have expressed some interest in a '96 race), but the difficulties facing Republicans are clearly manifest in this group of eight potential candidates.

While the Republicans in Congress are unified on a few basic themes (downsizing government, reforming Congress and fiscal conservatism), there is no such unity in the national party. Winning congressional elections district by district is one thing; but assembling a national majority behind one candidate is something else again.

There are deep divisions among the leaders themselves and within the broader Republican constituency. Mr. Dole and Mr. Gramm have been barely able to contain their hostility towards one another. Mr. Dole, as Senate Majority Leader, blocked Mr. Gramm's move to a position on a key Senate committee; and Mr. Gramm shot back by challenging the Majority Leader's conservative credentials.

Mr. Gramm and Mr. Dole are not the only two potential candidates sniping at one another. As Mr. Gramm and Mr. Alexander have moved forward to build strong campaign staffs, assembling a who's who of conservative political operatives from around the country, Marilyn Quayle, the wife of and leading political advisor to the former vice president (who has been filling in for him at speaking engagements while he recuperates from recent surgery) publicly derided both by implying that they couldn't "buy the election with big-name staffers."

Yet there is more to the friction in the Republican party than personal rivalries. Abortion, the issue that most divided the party in 1992 will continue to play a large role in 1996. Mr. Specter and Mr. Kemp are challenging the party to be "inclusive" — a code word for not allowing socially divisive issues (including abortion, racial equality programmes, homosexual rights and immigration) to stand in the way to the Republican party's effort to become a national majority. Meanwhile, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Keyes and Mr. Quayle will base their efforts primarily on these social issues, insisting that the party not fall prey to "social liberalism."

Mr. Kemp recently learned how divisive national Republican politics can be. Before the November 1994 elections Mr. Kemp travelled to California (his native state) to urge Republicans not to support an anti-immigration resolution that was on the state ballot. In his speech to the California Republicans, he warned that if they passed the controversial resolution (Proposition 187), "Republicans could be blamed for the anti-immigrant sentiment in America." He went on to caution that the "Republican party has no chance of being a majority party without being the party of immigrants — a party that is inclusive and not exclusionary." But Proposition 187 passed that November, and when Mr. Kemp returned to the state to address another Republican group he was hissed and booed by the audience because of his opposition to the resolution.

Given this personal animosity and division over issues, it remains difficult to see how the Republicans will choose a candidate who can unify the party in 1996 and on what basis that unity will be forged. It was an easy thing to be anti-Clinton, anti-Democrat and anti-Washington in 1994, but the Republicans now control Congress and their challenger to Mr. Clinton must stand for something positive in 1996.

Added to the problems facing both Democrats and Republicans is the growing national movement in support of third-party candidates. H. Ross Perot, while unable to build a real institutional presence on the national scene (his United We Stand America party is at best a personal vehicle for Mr. Perot), nevertheless remains a viable national troublemaker because of his willingness to spend millions of dollars to promote himself and to prey off the national malaise. Mr. Perot will not only be a factor in 1996, but others may decide to run once again for

president.

Reverend Jesse Jackson of the National Rainbow Coalition has been speculating about the probability of a third-party run for the presidency. He has organised his supporters in New Hampshire and Iowa in case he decides to challenge President Clinton in the Democratic primaries, but many of his supporters are urging him to leave the Democratic party's and forge an independent movement. In the past, Rev. Jackson has mobilised African-American and liberal voters, winning as much as 25 per cent of the Democratic vote. Whether he can raise the funds to mount an effectively widespread national campaign remains to be seen — but if he does he could peel off as many Democratic votes as Mr. Perot would peel off Republican votes and make the election a truly confusing picture.

There are also other "third" (or fourth or fifth) party efforts being discussed. One of the most intriguing possibilities involves the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, Colin Powell. What is interesting about Mr. Powell is not only that there is a national "draft Powell" effort underway that now boasts of an organisation in 33 states or that his candidacy is being touted by former senators and presidential candidates Paul Tsongas, but that Mr. Powell himself is such an enigma. Polls show that Mr. Powell could easily defeat President Clinton in a two-way to three-way race (he is the only candidate who would easily defeat Clinton). Polls also show extremely high popularity for the former general, among all segments of the population — liberal and conservative, rich and poor. But what is most disturbing is that voters polled also display total ignorance of the issue stances or policy orientation of the man.

It appears that voters know who they don't like — that is, any politician who they know (or who they have formed a picture of through media exposure). But the candidates they like best is the one they know very little about. Mr. Powell appears to strong and quiet (his African-American descent apparently is not viewed negatively). But voters cannot identify his position on economic, political or social issues — primarily because since his retirement Mr. Powell has been most circumspect in his pronouncements on the issues of the day.

What if he were to end the speculation of the press and announce his intention to run? Could his public image withstand press scrutiny? Would his popularity remain high once he was defined? Or he be able to articulate and define himself in sufficiently ambiguous terms to be able to maintain his pre-exposure appeal to all segments of the political spectrum?

In Mr. Powell's current appeal one sees clearly the dilemma of U.S. politics today. Voters are alienated from politics and see the political system as not working. They are tired of the endless debates and the one-upmanship of politics as usual. Our politics today are the politics of sensationalist "tabloids" and argumentative and noisy talk shows (of which CNN's "Crossfire" is the archetype). The yearning for a strong, quiet leader who can be whatever and whomever you want him to be borders on a cult-worship fantasy. But that is what the press and politicians have created.

The challenge facing the two major parties is to change this game or realise that they will face more and more confusion in U.S. national politics.

In any case, the race for '96 has begun. And in this race, the president and his defeated and divided party are facing victorious but equally divided Republican party. With a solid 40 per cent to 45 per cent electoral base, the president can win a three-way race. If it is a four-way race, the picture is quite confused.

The key to remember is that between now and November of 1996, the press and the political parties will focus even more on the elections. All issues, both domestic and foreign, will be examined to see what stances play best with the voters and the press in the all-important run for the White House.

Russia can't enter the future by turning to the past

By Yegor Gaidar

MOSCOW — The bloody debacle unfolding in Chechnya is not a surprise. It is the inevitable result of a general switch of Russian policy, evident from the beginning of 1994, back towards an imperial mentality and towards the so-called "strengthening of the state."

I resigned as first deputy prime minister at the start of 1994 precisely because I had failed to convince President Boris Yeltsin that such a course would lead to disaster. He fully rejected my advice that only a firm and coherent commitment to market reforms could lead to a revival of economic growth and stability that would enable democracy to take hold over the long run.

Instead he took the opposite course throughout 1994. Economic stabilisation efforts were cut short, the government took a more repressive stand on the domestic scene, and in foreign policy Russia moved away from the Western democracies and became more aggressive in dealing with neighbours in the "near abroad."

The Dec. 6 summit in Budapest of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), at which Mr. Yeltsin unleashed worries by speaking of a "cold peace," was a severe defeat for the advances that Russian foreign policy had made in recent years.

I am not aware of all the internal details of this turn of events during 1994. But having been in that situation before, I can imagine how various advisers insisted in their conversations with the president that "liberal traditions don't have roots in Russia" and that "it is high time to establish order and put your foot down."

The relative victory of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in the last elections gave added force to the argument that such reasoning accorded with Russian pub-



lic opinion.

Apparently, there was no one left in his circle to warn the president that when someone in Russia talks in a trembling voice about "strengthening the state," it usually leads to a bloody mess, especially when it means that the government decides to resolve complicated and delicate ethnic problems by force. Now these same advisers make helpless gestures and exclaim that they didn't intend events to unfold as they have.

If my experience is any guide, the mechanism to shield those responsible then becomes engaged out of fear of the consequences of their actions. Usually that means trying to cover up the mistakes of the first venture by diverting attention with an even bigger one. In the days and weeks ahead, we must be very

wary of what is to come on this score.

This whole dynamic has led Mr. Yeltsin to commit ever more tragic mistakes, which together now present a major threat to my country. I have already said publicly that the danger of a military coup cannot be ruled out.

The combat in Chechnya is, first of all, a major blow to the hard-held unity of Russia. Only six months ago, one could say that all talk about dissolution of the Federation was irresponsible speculation by those who understood little. Today this menace has become serious.

Everybody understands that the government won't be able to undertake military action everywhere trouble pops up. The army has shown in Grozny that it is not very well prepared and

organised. That means that the central authorities are discredited. Faith in them has been undermined, and people look upon them as unreliable, unpredictable and dishonest.

Internationally, Russia is now looked upon with distrust because its direction and intentions are unknown.

If the president continues to deepen his misadventure by pursuing the policy of settling the Chechen issue by force, Grozny will certainly fall, but with unacceptable large numbers of casualties. And after that only one thing is certain: a long-term guerrilla war, or at least a terrorist conflict, all paid for with the lives of our hapless young men.

While it is unlikely that an Islamic front will form against Russia, we can be sure that we will suffer vio-

lent hostility from within the Federation — not only from Chechnya but also from Ingushetia and the Chechen part of Dagestan.

The key to stopping this disaster from blowing up further is fully within the hands of President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. This is true not only according to Russian constitution but also in the actual balance of political forces in the country.

I know they fear that, if we leave Chechnya now, Russia will disintegrate as the Soviet Union did. But they should ask themselves why did this not happen before. De facto, Chechnya became independent back in the autumn of 1991, when we still had a Soviet president. Despite the secessionist declarations, Russia did not disintegrate in the interven-

ing years, but became more unified and strong. So why suddenly bomb Chechnya now, in 1995? What changed?

Ooe excuse for waging war now is that the crime problem emanating from networks in Chechnya has got out of control. True, there is such a problem. But should be resolved by the ordinary means employed against criminals elsewhere. If we were to follow the logic of Mr. Yeltsin's advisers on this score, we would have to start bombing a host of Moscow suburbs where there are Mafia-type concentrations far more threatening to the daily life of ordinary Russians.

Certainly it is harder to get out of Chechnya now than it was before Dec. 16, when the chances for a peaceful resolution were irresponsibly squandered by Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov, who was assigned to the negotiations.

Still, from the standpoint of Russia's overall interests, negotiations will yield better results than any resolution of the Chechen conflict that could possibly emerge from continued use of force.

Simply, there are other ways to think about the problem. Is Britain about to disintegrate because of its negotiations with the IRA? Will China disintegrate because it has not conquered Taiwan?

Like many other Russians, I can only hope that Mr. Yeltsin will see, as a result of this disaster, that the old methods cannot be applied to the new world; that Russia's future cannot be secured by a return to the habits of the past.

The way to begin changing course is by ridding himself of those advisers in the Defence Ministry and the National Security Council who pushed him beyond his better instincts.

This comment was translated by Genrikh Borovik for New Perspectives Quarterly.

Arbor Day symbolises hope

(Continued from page 1)

selected as a symbol for peace and a step towards comprehensive agricultural and economic development of the Wadi Araba region. Mr. Ben Tarif said that the Ministry of Agriculture distributed nearly half a million olive saplings and 300,000 other fruit saplings this year, in addition to seven million forest trees to be planted during this agricultural season by organisations, individuals, schools, farmers and institutions.

House assails U.N. move

(Continued from page 1)

form a technical committee to study the farmers' demands in order to reach a decision that would "do justice to both producers and consumers." The committee also recommended that the farmers' debts to the Jordan Cooperative Organisation be paid in accordance with a schedule that would take into account the harvesting seasons of crops. The House, which will hold its next meeting Wednesday, also referred to its Judicial Committee a draft law on the establishment of a union for artists and a draft law on insurance, which was sent back to the House by the Upper House of Parliament after amending it.

Saudis, Yemenis in standoff

(Continued from page 1)

tween Sanaa and Riyadh. Yemeni soldiers recovered part of the disputed sector, but the Saudis are demanding that the troops withdraw before continuing talks with Sanaa. Tension has remained high between the two countries, whose relations deteriorated during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis when Riyadh accused Sanaa of backing Baghdad. Yemen claims sovereignty over three provinces — Najran, Jizan and Assir — assigned to the Saudi kingdom under a treaty signed in 1934. Sanaa argues that the treaty expired in September 1992 and is opposed to re-

Rocket hits settler house

(Continued from page 1)

Joint crime ring Israeli soldiers, a Palestinian policeman and Israeli crooks joined forces in a car theft scam, the authorities said Sunday. Israeli police stumbled on the ring when they halted a suspect car at a road block near the autonomous Gaza Strip. Two soldiers and a leading underworld figure were arrested several weeks ago and revealed how the gang operated. A car thief in Beersheva, southern Israel, would tell soldiers where he had parked stolen vehicles. They would drive them through the border crossing into Gaza and the Palestinian policeman would take care of them from there. The soldiers were paid \$300 per car. Hundreds of vehicles went through the system, police said. accidentally during a training exercise at a nearby base, but after preliminary inquiries believed that unknown assailants had staged a dramatic attack. Tensions were running high in the city after soldiers on Saturday used tear-gas to halt clashes. Trouble erupted after settlers tried to force Arab shopkeepers to close to observe the Jewish holy day. A Palestinian wounded two settlers on the edge of Hebron on Thursday. Hebron, home to about 400 Jewish settlers among more than 110,000 Arabs, is a flashpoint of violence. It has been especially tense since last February when a settler shot dead more than 30 Palestinian worshippers in a mosque. In Nablus, Israeli troops fired teargas at Palestinians who were hurling stones at them on Sunday. No injuries were reported.

Chechens fend off Russians

(Continued from page 1)

Grozny itself, including its lifeline road to the south. He said that the Russian forces were winning control of buildings around the palace, one by one, and that the Chechen defenders were down to five tanks, eight armoured troop carriers, 15 cannons and eight rocket-launchers. In Moscow, the government's official press service said: "It was decided to continue combat operations on Sunday to seize central Grozny, to block, to disengage and to disarm illegal armed forces." It acknowledged that air strikes were being made against "separate targets." Sunday's raids were clearly aimed at terrorising the local populations which are sure Moscow aims at destroying them in order to keep its grip on the tiny Caucasian republic. Many Chechens are quick to compare their plight with the siege of Stalingrad, now called Volgograd, which was flattened by Hitler's armies in 1942 and 1943 but became a proud symbol of resistance to the Nazis. Military experts say that, just like Stalingrad, the capture of a city like Grozny is impossible without a heavy loss of life and massive resources. Before the war started a month ago, the city had a population of 400,000. The Russian military seems reluctant to send its infantry into a final pitched battle for Grozny. The latest assault by the Russians, which started on Thursday, is the third in the war, which started on Dec. 11 when Russian troops rolled into Chechnya to crush its three-year-old drive to secede from Russia. The Chechens have made a mockery of the Russian army which, for all its inefficiency, was the world's largest in



King Ronald Mutebi wears his crown in Kampala, Uganda: Tribal power reasserts itself in Africa

A map does not a nation make

Redrawing Africa's borders will do nothing to solve the continent's problems, says Richard Dowden

THE SEARCH for the cause of Africa's woes — and an appropriate response to them — is becoming increasingly a non-debate between two groups of fantasists. On the one side stand the economic doctors from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund who repeat the endless mantras that their medicine is working and things will get better. Behind them stand the Western governments who control them, calling for "good governance" and "sustained economic adjustment," pausing only to wring their hands at yet another disaster.

On the other side is an alliance between unconstructed Marxist academics, many of them Africans living in exile, and the politically correct here who want to believe that Africa would have been a paradise if it had not been for European intervention. Their solution is for the West to pay billions of pounds of "compensation" for slavery, imperialism and economic exploitation. The two groups live in their own fantasy worlds and do not talk to each other.

Africans living in Africa will change and perhaps save Africa. But they could be greatly helped by outsiders were it not for this polarisation of the debate — in which both sides are far removed from Africa's realities.

Take, for example, their analyses of the supposed cause of political instability: Africa's borders. The accepted view among Western politicians is that it is the inevitable consequence of tribalism. The other side blames the borders that were drawn by the imperial European powers. Several leading African thinkers, including Professor Ali Mazrui of Kenya and Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel prize-winning playwright, have recently called for them to be redrawn.

In fact, draft and disruptive as they were, these boundaries have rarely

been the source of war or political instability in Africa. Since independence 30 years ago, African heads of state have agreed that the borders are inviolable and would not be challenged. By and large they have kept that agreement. Apart from Somalia's invasion of Ethiopia in 1977 and Tanzania's invasion of Uganda in 1979, Africa's wars have not been between states or about borders. They have been internal conflicts.

The question is: would Africa be any more stable if the borders were redrawn? But that raises the question of what Africa was like before the Europeans came and what it would be like had there been no imperial intervention.

In the mid-19th century, Africa contained between 6,000 and 10,000 political units, usually kingdoms, based on linguistic, cultural or ethnic groups. In only a few cases were there permanent institutions that survived the death of the ruler. Most cannot be called states, and they were in a constant flux of conquest and absorption, domination and disintegration.

It is hard to see how, within 100 years, thousands of such societies would have evolved any more peacefully into modern states.

The centralised nation-states bequeathed to Africa by Europe are now under pressure from above and below. From above, the West has imposed radical economic changes on African states. Their currencies have been floated and the urban elite — the professionals on whom any state depends — have been impoverished by the subsequent collapse in their salaries. State enterprises, sources of almost endless political patronage that brought some stability, have been sold or closed down. The boss can no longer use the glue of state patronage to keep a nation together.

Meanwhile, as a new generation becomes disillusioned with a failing political

system, there are calls for democracy and freedom. Shorn of any ideology or meaningful national rallying cry, they tend to forge alliances on ethnic or regional grounds. The re-emergence of these ethnic alliances is threatening to tear Africa to pieces as Somalia and Liberia have been destroyed. But does that mean that the state boundaries should be redrawn, taking account of these atavistic ethnic divisions?

There have been two cases recently where new states have been carved out of the independence boundaries. One is Eritrea — a country whose sole historical claim to statehood was based on its once having been an Italian colony. Far from resurrecting an ancient African state or kingdom, Eritrea was purely colonial in its origins.

The second is Somalia, where the northern clans recreated Somaliland, another colonial border. Somalia is also the only country in Africa with a single ethnic group, culture, language and religion. The examples of neither Somalia nor Eritrea suggest that a redrawing of Africa's boundaries is a solution.

Wars elsewhere in Africa — in Uganda, Angola and Liberia, for example — have not been caused by secessionist movements; they are the result of winner-takes-all politics whereby an ethnic group that failed to win an election and felt excluded, waged war to bring down the winner. There has recently been a secessionist movement in the south, but it seems to derive from personal hatred for President Mobutu, not from a genuine desire to be a separate state. A similar hatred for the Thatcher government resulted in the sudden rise in support for Scottish independence in the late Eighties.

In Rwanda and Burundi, the Hutus and Tutsis have never inhabited separate territories, so boundary redrawing is irrelevant.

They lived on the same hills, in the same communities — which is why civil war turned into genocide. War in such circumstances is not about defending territory but about removing the other people completely — extermination. In this, Rwanda and Burundi are unique in Africa; nowhere else do two peoples live locked into the same society and land.

The idea that a group of wise men can solve Africa's wars by wandering around the continent with maps and pencils and shifting a few boundary markers is as ludicrous as it sounds.

What may happen, in fact, is that the boundaries simply melt. As the state weakens in Africa, powerful barons are emerging who command the allegiance of their regional or ethnic group. In some areas it is the traditional rulers who are reemerging. Far from being swept away by the march of (Western) progress, these families have begun reasserting themselves. Their sons and daughters, educated as accountants, lawyers and businessmen, are bringing together the old and the modern and forming new networks of power and influence.

In Uganda, the recently reestablished court of the Kabaka is resurfacing as a political power base. In Nigeria, the Obas and Emirs and other local kings, always discreetly powerful, are now becoming more open and public in their exercise of influence. In South Africa, following the restoration of power to the Zulu king, there are a host of other kings and chiefs stretching their political muscles.

The problem of these informal states is that too often they depend on a single man. Because of the nature of the extended African family, when a man dies scores and sometimes hundreds of relatives descend for their cut — and are paid off. It is exceedingly difficult for a financial empire — or a

political one — to be handed down to a single successor. In some African kingdoms, the death of the king was followed by chaos in which the potential successors fought each other until one killed or drove out all his rivals.

Central governments will have to deal with these new power bases. They may fight them or they may establish written or unwritten agreements with them, but in a few years' time, when a stranger travels through Zaire, for example, he may need not only a visa from central government, but he will also need the blessing of the local chief, warlord or king. A company that wishes to do business in Africa will pay tax not only to the central government but to the local chief as well. It will be messy and complicated but in many places it is already happening. Only companies who know how the system works, modelling themselves on Tiny Rowland's Lonrho, will be able to operate there.

Without investment, economic development will have to emerge from within. This may not be the obstacle it sounds, since many of the families who are carving out empires for themselves in Africa are very rich indeed. At present, however, they prefer to put their money in banks in Europe because of instability at home. The stability they might themselves provide could induce them to bring back some of their funds as local investment.

Alongside these new power bases, trading patterns are developing which appear the on no World Bank statistic. Some are old routes suppressed by the imperial borders, others are new; but Africa's hidden market makes the continent far richer than the official figures suggest.

Many of these new informal states and trading routes cross the state boundaries. How will that affect them? Sierra Leone, for example, might have

ambassadors posted throughout the world, even though the government in fact controls little more than Freetown. It could also be that when one crosses the border into Sierra Leone into Guinea, there would be a man with a stamp who checks your passport and takes money. Whether that money goes into his own pocket, or to a local baron, or to the central government, would depend on local political circumstances. With other countries, the borders may simply melt away as new trading and travelling routes make them irrelevant.

This certainly seems the most likely outcome in West Africa, where Liberia and Sierra Leone have already evolved along these lines. Cameroon and Togo are waiting to go the same way and there are similar rumblings in Nigeria and Ghana. Only the national armies are preventing this. But as states become poorer and weaker, the loyalties of national armies are thrown into doubt. They, too, may find other allegiances, either as a unit or fragmented.

In East Africa the conditions exist for a similar evolution, depending on what happens in Kenya. The exception, for the moment, is southern Africa as long as South Africa remains strong, single and stable. If it does, it will establish a political economy and military hegemony in the region and may even extend its influence as far as southern Zaire.

In the rest of the continent, though, the nation-state may be in terminal decline. New networks of power and wealth are emerging. These new networks, growing out of the ruins, may have deeper foundations and may create more truly indigenous structures than the imperial heritage. They are the realities outsiders must recognise and respond to.

The Independent

Sawt Al Shaab firing sparks row

(Continued from page 12)

the conflict and he offered Mr. Tarawneh the chance to resign in order to "save his face." He added that Mr. Tarawneh refused to take a leave of absence he had offered him. Accordingly, Mr. Majali said he took the decision to fire Mr. Tarawneh with the backing of all 11 members of the board. Mr. Majali rejected charges he was interfering in the editorial policy of the paper. But Mr. Tarawneh referred to specific incidents when he refused to run articles under the signature of "the editor" at the request of Majali, such as an article criticising former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat. The article was finally printed under the by-line of "the editorial consultant," whose growing influence at the paper, according to one journalist, "is becoming alarming." Mr. Tarawneh admitted

that he refused to draft a new organisational structure for the newspaper but said his decision was based on his refusal to terminate the services of journalists, which he said was the goal of the request for reorganisation.

He said he refused the leave of absence Mr. Majali offered him because that would have allowed the chairman and the editorial consultant to run the articles they wanted in the days before the announcement of the new cabinet while he was still the editor of the paper.

"I did not mind praising the previous government. But I did mind unfair criticism of Jordanian political personalities," he said.

Mr. Tarawneh said the board of directors entrusted Mr. Majali with solving the problem through reconciliation and not by firing him, adding that some members of the board oppose his dismissal.

"Members of the board did not even meet with me to listen to my point of view. For that I blame them," said Mr. Tarawneh, who in the past worked as chief editor of Al Dustour Arabic daily, and most recently as adviser at the Ministry of Information.

A member of the board, Quteibeh Abu Qura, declined comment on the issue and others were not available for comment Sunday. One journalist at the newspaper who requested anonymity said the journalists were upset about the way in which Mr. Tarawneh was fired. "Editors should not be treated that way," he said.

But he said Mr. Tarawneh should have cooperated in drawing up a new organisational structure which he could have presented in a way that would have improved the working conditions of the journalists without succumbing to demands for terminating the services

of any member of the staff. "That would have put the ball in the management's court," he said. The journalist conceded that the performance of the paper was declining but attributed that to the "frustrating" conditions in which journalists work.

"We informed the chairman in a meeting that we were not going to work properly in the conditions that prevail at the paper. You cannot pay a journalist JD 150 a month and expect him to work with his full potential," he said.

The journalist spoke of a general frustration among the staff for the failure of the management to redress their situation, blaming that more than any other reason, for the apparent decline in the performance of the newspaper.

But Mr. Majali said the paper would get a new lease of life now that it has obtained permission from the Ministry of Trade and Industry to seek JD 5 million of new investment in the paper.

U.N. completes Mogadishu move

(Continued from page 12)

The gunmen then barricaded the office.

Civilian staff were being withdrawn from the main U.N. compound in Mogadishu on Sunday and pulled back to the southern compound and the nearby airport and seaport.

The U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) has sacked about 600 of its 2,500 Somali employees and is preparing to lay off others in line with its plan to withdraw from the Horn of Africa country by the end of March.

The sackings have raised panic among Somalis and many former employees are scrambling to register claims for what they say is money owed to them by UNOSOM. All aid agencies in the capital suspended non-emergency operations last week to press for the release of a French aid worker kidnapped by gunmen on the road to Mogadishu airport on

Dec. 17.

Diplomats expect full-scale war to break out between rival factions in Mogadishu after the U.N. pullout, with each trying to grab what they can of abandoned U.N. equipment.

Mr. Ali Mahdi said on Saturday a battle for the main U.N. compound loomed. The port would close unless a committee of clans was put in charge of it, he said.

He said the departure of U.N. troops might prompt all foreign aid workers to leave, resulting in a famine similar to that of 1991 and 1992.

At least 300,000 people died in the famine that followed a complete collapse of authority in Somalia after president Mohammad Siad Barre was toppled early in 1991.

A U.S.-led U.N. force in 1992 moved in to curb anarchy and support the relief effort but the Americans

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Bouncing cheques on the rise

At the end of 1994, there were 3,389 persons behind bars for writing cheques which were not honoured due to insufficient funds in their accounts. The number of people locked up for the same offence at the end of 1993 was 1,505 less. Amman Attorney-General Rafeh Tarawneh revealed that there were 5,959 cases of uncashed cheques in 1994 whereas the number in 1993 stood at 3,821. Even during the first ten days of 1995, the attorney-general's office received 200 cases of uncashed cheques, compared to 155 cases during the first ten days of 1994. According to Mr. Tarawneh, most cheques were for amounts of JD 306 million, were not cleared. The number of returned cheques in 1993 was 50 per cent higher than in 1992. Bankers attribute the situation to the economic slowdown in general and to the pressure exerted by the beneficiary on a debtor to write a cheque to serve as a guarantee. Another reason could well be a chain process whereby a merchant would write a cheque on the strength of another cheque he had received from a third party (Al Ra'i).

The Central Bank of Jordan plans to set up a committee to study the rising phenomenon of returned cheques. The committee will be headed by Dr. Hanzeh Haddad, a lawyer, and representatives from the central bank, the Association of Banks in Jordan and the chambers of commerce and industry. The number of returned cheques during the first ten months of last year reached 352,000 cheques amounting to JD 302 million. The number of returned cheques during the whole of 1993 was about 350,000 cheques for a value of JD 306 million (Al Dustour).

The government decided to increase its support to farmers who produce grains by giving them higher prices for their output. Prices differ according to the kind of grain, but wheat, for example, will be bought for JD 165 per tonne instead of JD 147 while lentils will be bought for JD 340 per tonne instead of JD 300 (Al Ra'i).

Preparations are under way to hold the economic summit in Amman from Oct. 30 until Nov. 1, 1995. According to knowledgeable sources, it is assumed that the number of participants from all over the world and from public and private sectors would be less than one thousand. The projects to be submitted to participants should be ready for speedy implementation. Moreover, it was also agreed not to limit the discussions to big projects only, but to include medium and small-scale schemes that contribute to providing work opportunities (Al Ra'i).

Royal Jordanian decided to open four new centres for the duty-free market of Queen Alia Airport to be able to serve passengers around the clock (Al Ra'i).

The Department of Specifications and Standardisation will become administratively and financially independent as of Tuesday, Jan. 17, 1995. Under a new law, the department will have a board of directors representing concerned ministries and government institutions as well as representatives from the private sector (Al Ra'i).

The governor of the Palestinian Monetary Authority said that any move to issue a Palestinian currency in the future will be carried out in consultation and cooperation with Jordan in the first place (Al Ra'i).

World semiconductor sales top \$100 billion in 1994

SAN JOSE, California (AFP) — World semiconductor sales breached the \$100 billion mark for the first time in 1994, soaring 28 per cent to \$109.7 billion, according to figures released Monday.

"As the worldwide hunger for competing power rises, semiconductor companies are in the enviable position of having demand outstrip supply," said Gary Grandbois, director of specialist analysts Dataquest.

The revenue of Asia-Pacific companies grew 63 per cent to \$10.1 billion, outstripping European suppliers for the first time.

U.S. giant Intel remained at the head of the field of semiconductor producers, with sales of more than \$10 billion and a claimed 9.2 per cent of the world market.

But while U.S. semiconductor makers remained the world leaders, with a 41.4 per cent share of the market, they were in danger of being edged out by Japanese manufacturers with 40.5 per cent.

Japanese company NEC notched up the second largest world sales, at \$7.94 billion, a 29 per cent improvement over 1993 and a 7.2 per cent share of the market.

Another Japanese con-

cern, Toshiba, was in third place with sales of \$7.52 billion and a 6.9 per cent market share.

The sharp increase in the world market in 1994 was even steeper than that of 1993, when sales rose 26 per cent to \$85.6 billion.

Japanese semiconductor makers saw their sales improve 28 per cent to \$44.4 billion, with European sales up 28 per cent to \$9.8 billion.

U.S. sales grew more slowly, but were still 22 per cent higher at \$45.4 billion.

This meant the U.S. share of the global semiconductor market shrank by two percentage points, while that of Japan held steady and that of the Asia-Pacific region rose two points to 9.2 per cent of the total.

UAE reduces software piracy

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates has made good progress enforcing new copyright laws but must do more to stop computer software pirates, officials said Sunday.

"Up to the end of 1994 we've got rid of 90 per cent of the copies of American and European works," Abdul Aziz Al Madfaa, assistant undersecretary for censorship at the UAE's information ministry, told a seminar on intellectual property.

The UAE began enforcing new copyright laws last summer. Inspectors raided businesses to confiscate unlicensed cassettes, videotapes and computer software and other pirated goods.

"We cannot say the law has been one hundred per cent implemented. Of course the implementation of the law

has to be in stages," Mr. Madfaa said, adding that the authorities would focus on rounding up pirated copies of Arab works in 1995.

Mr. Madfaa said software piracy was particularly hard to clamp down on compared with other forms of piracy because copying was easy to conceal and investigators needed specialist knowledge.

But he cited an industry estimate that software sales in the UAE had risen around 60 per cent since implementation began.

"We've seen some changes but it's moving pretty slowly," Microsoft Middle East General Manager Charles Allen told Reuters by telephone from Dubai.

"When they do these raids, they need to publicise them. Otherwise there is no deterrent effect and they have to

raid everybody," he said. Other Arab Gulf states have brought in similar laws against piracy in the region, the Middle East's most developed market for information technology.

Sherif Saadullah, an official of the Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organisation, said bringing the law fully to bear against the UAE's software pirates would take time.

"We all want to move fast (but) ... we should take into consideration that there's a whole government apparatus that has to be trained," he told the seminar.

Microsoft belongs to the U.S.-based Business Software Alliance (BSA), a group of firms which combats software piracy.

The BSA says in 1993 piracy cost its members at least \$150 million in lost business in the UAE and Saudi Arabia alone, compared with \$300 million in the Middle East as a whole.

Piracy rates in the Arab Gulf states in 1993 were all over 90 per cent that year, the BSA says — in other words, there are over nine copies for every piece of legitimate software.

Mr. Allen said more companies in the UAE were getting legitimate software as a result of the law. The BSA is helping train software inspectors for the UAE government, he added. "But there's still a lot of piracy in shops ... it's moving in the right direction but it has to move faster."

Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (January 9 - January 13, 1995)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated sharply against other major currencies at the end of last week. It ended the week 1.89 per cent lower against the mark, 1.23 per cent lower against sterling and 2.87 per cent lower against the yen.

The dollar retreated sharply against other major currencies Monday. Its depreciation came on the back of political instability in both Italy and Spain. News that a leading U.S. debt rating agency might reduce the rating of Italian government bonds triggered traders to sell Italian lira for marks. The Federal Reserve also contributed to the dollar's weakness by intervening in the market to support the Mexican currency. On the other hand, the dollar declined against the yen on comments by the U.S. ambassador to Japan, stating that his government might use the "Super 301" legislation against Japan if deemed necessary.

The dollar continued its depreciation against the mark Tuesday, while appreciating marginally against the yen and sterling. The dollar's depreciation against the mark was due to the mark's strength against both the Italian and Spanish currencies. Meanwhile, the dollar benefited against the yen and sterling from a statement by the U.S. treasury secretary, who said that he expects a stronger dollar in the future.

On Wednesday, the dollar rose slightly against the mark and sterling, while stabilising against the yen, though it declined during early trading hours. The U.S. unit suffered from the Mexican financial crisis, as well as the mark's continued appreciation against the Italian and Spanish currencies.

The dollar declined sharply against other major currencies Thursday. Its decline was due to the mark's continued appreciation against other European currencies. Moreover, the Mexican financial crisis affected the yen positively as it ignited investors' fears from investing in both Thailand and Hong Kong. These fears caused investors to liquidate their positions in these markets and shift their investments to Japan.

At the end of the week, the dollar rose against the European currencies while depreciating against the yen. The dollar appreciated against the mark in view of the latter's decline against the Italian and Spanish currencies. The Spanish peseta appreciated on news that the Spanish prime minister had resigned, while the Italian lira appreciated on news that former finance minister, Lamberto Dini, was appointed as Italy's new prime minister. Meanwhile, the yen continued its appreciation due to the flow of funds from Far East emerging markets.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.5345 marks, 98.55 yen and at \$1.5685 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	6/1/1995	13/1/1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5495	1.5685	1.23%
Deutsche Mark	1.5635	1.5345	1.89%
Swiss Franc	1.3100	1.2890	1.63%
French Franc	5.4000	5.2965	1.95%
Japanese Yen	101.38	98.55	2.87%

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	6/1/1995	13/1/1995
U.S. Dollar	5.68	7.18
Sterling Pound	5.87	7.75
Deutsche Mark	4.87	5.68
Swiss Franc	3.75	4.54
French Franc	5.50	6.87
Japanese Yen	2.12	2.50

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6970	0.6990
Sterling Pound	1.0973	1.0978
Deutsche Mark	0.4534	0.4557
Swiss Franc	0.5402	0.5429
French Franc	0.1515	0.1522
Japanese Yen	0.7058	0.7093
Dutch Guilder	0.4049	0.4069
Swedish Krona	0.0432	0.0434
Italian Lira	0.0432	0.0434
Belgian Franc	0.0432	0.0434

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COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	80	14660	183.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2700	11379	4.200
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	2880	11874	4.180
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	2135	12226	5.900
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	9176	27811	3.030
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1799	2764	1.540
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1436	5281	3.680
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	336	1469	4.410
HEIT JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1900	5987	3.160
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	26435	39785	1.500
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4475	7245	1.620
BANKS SECTOR	53222	140749	INDEX NUMBER: 158.11
YAMOUK INSURANCE & REINSURANCE	100	305	3.000
HOLY LAND INSURANCE	400	1000	2.500
INSURANCE SECTOR	500	1460	INDEX NUMBER: 137.29
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	9900	18246	1.530
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	880	1275	1.490
JORDAN RIGGS MINERAL	600	1620	2.600
JORDAN RIGGS MINERAL	300	1440	4.800
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	580	1733	3.150
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	7733	17260	2.350
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	2100	2578	1.220
HOLIDAY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	1300	949	750
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMERCIAL HOTELS	2000	4790	2.400
ARAB CENTER FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1300	4533	3.500
SERVICES SECTOR	26702	51490	INDEX NUMBER: 131.29
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	13299	38973	2.940
THE ARAB PETROLEUM	150	1213	8.500
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	390	3749	9.700
THE JORDAN WOODS MILLS	700	5320	7.650
ARAB PETROLEUM REFINERY	1041	5576	5.340
ARAB PETROLEUM REFINERY	600	3720	6.250
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	650	1794	2.800
RAFTA INDUSTRIES	2850	7811	2.720
ARAB BANK DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1246	20188	16.200
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	6700	5761	7.150
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	800	5670	7.150
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	90481	96405	0.880
ARAB PETROLEUM REFINERY	450	6484	1.400
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	200	828	4.140
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	500	750	1.560
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	1000	805	800
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	150	285	1.920
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	500	1340	2.720
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	2650	4770	1.800
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	3150	13125	4.200
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	8650	17423	2.080
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	140426	223182	INDEX NUMBER: 127.46
GRAND TOTAL	221000	416880	INDEX NUMBER: 143.46
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	186757	243674	INDEX NUMBER: 143.46

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Arabi take on Ramtha in Jordan Cup semifinal

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's second most important soccer competition nears its end Monday when Al Arabi take on Al Ramtha in the semifinal match of the Jordan Cup.

Al Ramtha had won their first leg encounter 1-0, therefore a win or draw will automatically move them to the final against Al Faisali who reached the final after eliminating Al Hussein.

Both Faisali-Hussein matches had ended in a scoreless tie. Al Faisali reached the final after defeating Al Hussein 10-9 in a penalty shootout.

Titleholders Al Faisali are aiming to win their record eighth Jordan Cup title.

Although the team has had its ups and downs this season, Al Faisali are now third in the first division with two matches remaining.

Unlike other seasons, the Kingdom's most successful soccer team have only won the 1994 Cup Winner's Cup.

In 1993, Al Faisali clinched the first division, the Jordan Cup and the Cup Winner's Cup, and in 1992 they won the Jordan Cup, the Shield and the first division.

Al Hussein, who are now fourth in the first division were eager to add the '94 Jordan to the Federation Shield title which they won by defeating Al Faisali to clinch their first major

title. The team's only other best achievement was finishing second in the first division in 1990 and 1992.

Al Ramtha who are now two points behind leaders Al Wihdat in the first division have a good chance of reaching the final and have maintained a relatively consistent form this season. They won the Jordan Cup in 1990 and 1991 and last won the Federation Shield in 1993.

Al Arabi hope to repeat their 1986 Jordan Cup success when they overcame Al Jazireh 1-0 to clinch their first major title. On their way to the final, Al Arabi had then eliminated Al Faisali, Al Ramtha and Al Hussein. Al Arabi had also reached the semifinal in the 1990 season but were knocked out by Al Hussein.

The knockout competition had begun on Nov. 13 with 28 first and second division teams divided into two groups. All first division teams except for Al Karmel survived the first and second rounds.

In the quarterfinals, Al Hussein beat Al Jazireh while Al Faisali eliminated Al Wihdat in Group 1. Al Arabi knocked out Kufroum and Al Ramtha beat Al Ahli in Group 2.

Only five teams have won the title since the competition was initiated in 1980: Al Faisali have clinched the title seven times, Al Wihdat three times, Al Ramtha twice, and Al Jazireh and Al Arabi once each.

Norwegian sprinter tests positive

OSLO (R) — Sprinter Aham Okeke has tested positive for doping again and is finished as an athlete in Norway. Norway's Athletics Association's chief said Sunday.

Lars Martin Kaupang, president of the association, said the result of a B-test confirmed the reading of an A-test which showed a high level of the hormone testosterone.

"He is finished as a top athlete in Norway," Kaupang told Norwegian radio. "Okeke has broken all the rules."

Okeke, who came to Norway from Nigeria in 1982 and was granted Norwegian citizenship six years later, now faces a possible four-year ban by the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

NBA ROUNDUP Jazz upset Knicks; Magic crush 76ers

NEW YORK (R) — The New York Knicks had their eight-game winning streak snapped by the league's top road warriors Saturday as Karl Malone scored 21 points and pulled down 12 rebounds to lead the Utah Jazz to a 86-81 win.

The Jazz won for the 14th time in 16 games and ran their road victory streak to 12, four short of the all-time record set by the Lakers 23 years ago.

Malone and Jeff Hornacek, who had 19 points, each scored five during a 10-0 spurt in the fourth quarter that gave the Jazz an 84-77 lead with 3:15 left.

Patrick Ewing, who led the Knicks with 22 points, 14 rebounds and six blocked shots, drew New York within 84-81 with two free throws. But Derek Harper missed a potential game-tying shot with 30 seconds left.

In Orlando, Shaquille O'Neal scored 31 points and grabbed 10 rebounds and Dennis Scott added 18 points as the Magic raised their perfect record at home to 17-0 with a 91-70 pounding of the Philadelphia 76ers.

O'Neal connected on 14-of-19 from the field and scored 11 points during the third quarter when the Magic pulled away en route to handing the Sixers their eighth straight loss.

The Magic have won 13 of their last 15 while the Sixers have dropped 13 of 15.

At Indiana, Todd Day's tip-in with 1.2 seconds remaining lifted the Milwaukee Bucks to a 97-95 victory that snapped the Pacers' 10-game home winning streak.

Day tipped in Vin Baker's miss after Milwaukee squandered a 95-89 lead in the final minute.

Glenn Robinson scored 21 points and Baker added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, who won for just the third time in their last 17 road games.

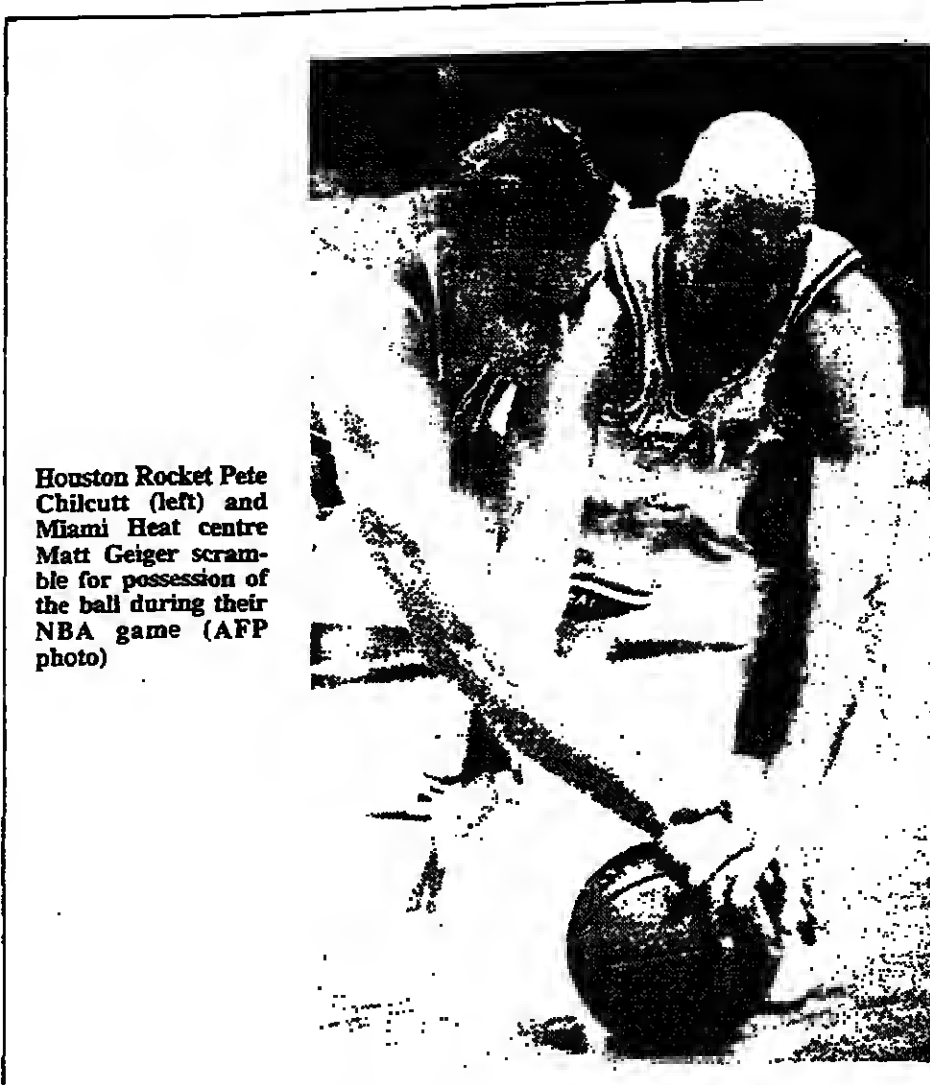
Rik Smits had 22 points and 13 rebounds and Reggie Miller scored 21 points for Indiana, which suffered its first home loss since November 9.

In Oakland, Tyrone Hill scored 20 points and had a three-point play early in overtime that gave Cleveland the lead for good as the Cavaliers rallied for a 103-97 victory over the reeling Golden State Warriors.

The Warriors, who dressed nine players and played just seven, have dropped 18 of their last 19 games.

Latrell Sprewell played the entire game, pacing Golden State with 22 points.

In Los Angeles, Dan Majerle scored 22 points despite sitting out the fourth quarter to lead seven players in double figures as the Phoenix



Houston Rocket Pete Chilcutt (left) and Miami Heat center Matt Geiger scramble for possession of the ball during their NBA game (AFP photo)

Suns ripped the Clippers 134-108.

Danny Ainge and Charles Barkley, who also sat out the final quarter, added 18 points each and Danny Manning scored 16 against his former club.

Barkley also missed nine minutes in the second quarter when he needed two stitches to close a cut on his chin after being caught with an inadvertent elbow.

The Suns have won 16 of their last 19 games.

In Denver, Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf scored a career-high 36 points and Reggie Williams recorded a triple-double with 14 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds to lead the Nuggets to a 118-104 upset of the Houston Rockets.

Hakeem Olajuwon led Houston with 41 points, giving him 88 points in the last two nights.

In Charlotte, Larry Johnson had 22 points as the Hornets extended their franchise-record winning streak to eight games with a 96-85 defeat of the Chicago Bulls.

The Hornets also extended their Franchise-best home winning streak to 11 games as Johnson scored at least 20 points for the ninth straight game.

Scottie Pippen led the Bulls with 19 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, but left the game midway through the fourth quarter with a pulled groin. Starting forward Toni Kukoc did not dress for Chicago due to a sprained right ankle.

At New Jersey, Rick Mahorn scored the last six points of a 20-4 second-half surge as the Nets rallied for a 93-84 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Derrick Coleman led the Nets with 22 points and 11 rebounds before fouling out late in the game. Kerry Anderson scored 16 of his 18 points in the second half for New Jersey.

In Dallas, Kevin Willis had 27 points and 15 rebounds to lead the Miami Heat to an 84-77 win over the Dallas Mavericks.

The Heat got 21 points, eight rebounds and seven assists from Billy Owens.

Jamal Mashburn led the Mavericks, who were a dismal 1-of-17 from three-point range, with 17 points.

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RESULTS

New Jersey	93	Minnesota	84
Milwaukee	97	Indiana	95
Utah	86	New York	81
Charlotte	96	Chicago	85
Orlando	91	Philadelphia	70
Miami	84	Dallas	77
Denver	118	Houston	104
Cleveland	103	Golden State	97 (OT)
Phoenix	134	L.A. Clippers	108

Nicole Miller for men perfume launched in Jordan



On the occasion of launching Nicole Miller perfume for men, in the Jordanian market, the Gifts Centre/Ibrahim and Khaled Abu Shakra Company held a press conference at the Marriott Hotel.

Mr. Gilles Chatelain, vice-president Riviera Concepts said at the press conference:

"Nicole Miller is fashion. Her fashion is stimulated by design and translated into fabric and fragrance. Inspired by the rugged textural smell of 'Guy Things' like a Baseball Mitt and Leather Loafers, this fragrance captures the smooth softness of Nubuck Leather."

To complement Nicole Miller's treasured "perfume pouch," Nicole Miller for men is whimsically reflected in a rugged bottle and box. Contemporary

corrugated contours encase the fresh essence of Nicole Miller for men inside and out.

The fragrance was described by its creator Nicole Miller: "Every woman deserves the perfect companion and that is why I have created one for her... My fragrance is for the young-thinking man. It is a modern, warm masculine scent with the twist of a neo-leather accord, which lends a sense of comfort and ease to the fragrance. It is for the classic yet sexy guy, who enjoys life's basic pleasures."

No matter what his desire, age, or personality, he can be himself wearing Nicole Miller for men.

I want men to feel comfortable when they experience the modern freshness of my new fragrance."

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1994 Jordan Times

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠AKQJ754 ♠43 ♣Q104

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1 ♣ 3 ♠

What action do you take?

A.—East's preempt has achieved its purpose. Four hearts is a gross underestimate. Five hearts asks partner for spade control; partner will read a four-spade cue-bid as agreeing clubs, so all subsequent new-suits bids also will be interpreted as cue-bids. Bite the bullet and bid six hearts.

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠AKJ632 ♠Q ♣A574 ♣Q3

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass

What do you bid now?

A.—Hands with 6-4 distribution present a problem to some. As a rule of thumb, rebid the six-card suit only with a minimum opening.

Since this hand is considerably better than that, it is correct to rebid two diamonds, then plan to bid spades again at your next turn.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠EA ♠8543 ♠KQJ3 ♠A63

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1 ♣ 1 ♠

What action do you take?

A.—You want to tell partner you have a good hand with heart support. A cue-bid of the enemy suit does just that. Bid two spades.

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠EJ63 ♠943 ♠55 ♠8732

The bidding has proceeded:

West North East South

1 ♣ 1 ♠

What do you bid now?

A.—Don't even think about bidding one no trump—that shows about a king more than you have, despite the limited room to maneuver. Partner has asked for your best suit, so oblige by bidding two clubs.

Q.5—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠AS 782 ♠A1094 ♠A9762

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1 ♣ Pass 2 ♣ Pass

What do you bid now?

A.—It depends on your methods.

If the two-over-one response was a game force, all you need do for the moment is raise to three diamonds. If not, and you play fourth-street forcing, this is the time to test out two hearts. If neither of these treatments is in your armory, jump to four diamonds.

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠965 ♠A94 ♠Q72 ♠8763

Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

A.—You have perfect no-trump distribution, but we are not brave enough to suggest you make that bid without a stopper in either black suit. Since you must do something, we suggest you raise to two hearts. This hand is easy, if you use the Forcing No Trump response—a preference to hearts on the next round will dampen partner's ardor.

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Deceptive Agassi prepares for Open debut

MELBOURNE (R) — Tennis master illusionist Andre Agassi is threatening to perform the same trick he perfected at Wimbledon in 1992 when he makes his Australian Open debut this week.

Then, as now, the world was fascinated with just about everything connected with Agassi, from his hair and clothes to his eating habits and love life. It scarcely noticed his tennis until he held the trophy aloft on Centre Court.

The same is true this time and the Las Vegas showman is doing nothing to divert Australia's gaze. In fewer than three days in Melbourne he must have answered a hundred questions about his appearance and a mere handful on his form.

Yet there is no doubt Agassi is secretly working hard behind the scenes. Flying in by chartered jet from Adelaide on Friday for an advance look at Flinders Park was far from the jaunt it may have seemed at the time.

The U.S. Open champion has played around the globe, but was prepared to listen to those who insisted Melbourne's unpredictable weather and enclosed centre court creates unique problems even for the top players.

Not all the advice whispered past Andre's ears in previous years has been so informed. But everyone seems to agree that the enforced break Agassi took after wrist surgery in December 1993 has produced a more thoughtful player.

Boris Becker, at Agassi's shoulder in the push towards

Pete Sampras's world number one ranking, is in no doubt.

"He changed last year," said the German. "For many years, in my opinion, he trained too little and didn't do enough with his talent. But starting with his operation, he thought about what he had to change to come back as a top tennis player. He started to train more, watch more closely what he ate and the results are there."

Sampras himself has singled out his compatriot as the most likely man to leap from the chasing pack. Leaving aside the jokes about his shaven head making him quicker around court, Agassi appears as motivated as at any time in his career.

"There's a certain amount of excitement not knowing what it's like," he admitted as he looked ahead to his first round match against South African Grant Stafford scheduled for Tuesday. "It's the same feeling as Wimbledon. I hope it's all cracked up to be."

Agassi took just five days off over the Christmas period, but otherwise devoted himself to training and practice with his coach Brad Gilbert, the man who persuaded him that talent alone was not enough to take him back to the top.

Training in the mid-afternoon heat on Friday, the 24-year-old looked sharp and insists a hot fortnight would be a help rather than a hindrance.

"I think the weather is suitable for me. My style usually means my opponents



World No. 2 Andre Agassi, sporting a new hairstyle, with girlfriend Brooke Shields

are working harder than I am which is nice when it's 100 degrees."

One person who won't be around to watch is the actress Brooke Shields, first to embrace Agassi after his U.S. Open triumph last September.

She is currently playing the role of Rizzo in the Broadway production of Grease, which Agassi has reportedly seen 14 times. Melbourne audience are hoping for similar entertainment from her boyfriend.

Gabby is a tennis force to be reckoned with again

A rejuvenated Gabriela Sabatini gave warning that she would be a major Australian Open threat by claiming her second straight singles title Sunday.

The 24-year-old Argentinian glamour girl slammed the door on a long and debilitating form slump as she outplayed top seed Lindsay Davenport to win the New South Wales Open 6-3, 6-4 in 74 minutes.

The victory extended her match winning streak to eight and followed a 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 thrashing of Davenport in the final of the Virginia Slims championship in November — her last tournament.

Before the Virginia Slims, Sabatini had not won a tournament since the Italian Open in May 1992. But these back-to-back triumphs — taking the number of career

victories to 27 — were a vindication of her faith in herself.

Sabatini had no hesitation in listing herself with number one seed Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Mary Pierce among the favourites in the women's competition at the Australian Open starting Monday in Melbourne.

"Winning a tournament before a Grand Slam is just the best," said Sabatini, who is officially seeded fifth and starts with a first round match in Melbourne against Marianne Werdel of America. "I couldn't ask for anything more."

Davenport went further. She ranked Sabatini behind only world number two Sanchez at the Open. Davenport said there had been a glaring change in Sabatini's game in a few months.

"She is striking the ball much harder now and she is really going for her first serve and making a lot," said the American.

"She is now able to step in and really rip her forehand and she has got more confidence to hit her backhand instead of just slicing or looping it."

Women's tennis rankings

1. Steffi Graf (Germany)
2. Arantxa Sanchez (Spain)
3. Conchita Martinez (Spain)
4. Jana Novotna (Czech)
5. Mary Pierce (France)
6. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)
7. Lindsay Davenport (USA)
8. Kimiko Date (Japan)
9. Natalia Zvereva (Belarus)
10. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)
11. Anke Huber (Germany)
12. Iva Majoli (Croatia)
13. Mary Joe Fernandez (USA)
14. Brenda Schultz (Netherlands)
15. Sabine Hack (Germany)

1st Division Soccer Championship

20th week heats up competition

By Aileen Bannayan

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The most astonishing results of the Kingdom's premier soccer competition will be credited to the past 20th week when Al Hussein lost their chance of capturing their first ever first division crown, while Al Wihdat remained at the top thanks to Al Qadissieh's 1-0 victory over Al Ramtha, and Al Arabi's unexpected 3-2 win over Al Hussein.

With only two more weeks to go, Al Wihdat now have a two point lead despite their 1-1 draw with Al Ahli. Their upcoming match is against Al Ramtha who trail in second place.

Al Hussein, who were the only other serious contenders and led the 12-team standings for most of the first round, began to lose their grip after their 2-1 loss to Kufroum in the 16th week. They later lost 2-0 to Al Ramtha, 1-0 to Al Wihdat, before their 3-2 loss to Al Arabi Friday.

Al Ramtha's loss was their first in the second round. They have a tough match ahead with Al Wihdat, and an easy one against Shabab Al Hussein.

Titleholders Al Faisali moved up to third place after their 5-0 win over last-placed Al Jeel, while Al Jazireh consolidated their place among the top five after a convincing 3-0 win over Kufroum.

The battle at the other end of the standings is also very interesting.

Al Qadissieh are among the last four with 18 points however they have two easy matches against Shabab Al Hussein and Al Jeel.

Al Arabi are eight with 19 points but have more difficult matches against Al Ahli and Al Wihdat.

Al Ahli and Kufroum are tied with 20 points in sixth and seventh places.

Al Ahli next play Al Arabi and Al Jazireh, while Kufroum meet Al Faisali and Al Karmel.

Al Faisali, who won the title for the past two seasons, delighted their fans with a hat-trick from striker Jiryes Tadros while Firas Khalileh and Mousa Awad added the other two in their 5-0 win over Al Jeel who are playing their final matches in the first division.

Meanwhile, Al Jazireh continued to be one of the most surprising teams.

Although often threatened with relegation throughout most seasons, they have managed to keep a top-five standing especially after their win over Kufroum.

Violence erupted after their match but was quickly contained by stadium police. The incident was reminiscent of their first round encounter at Al Mafraq Stadium when Kufroum fans attacked Jazireh's supporters with rocks causing one spectator to lose his eyesight.

Although Al Wihdat's

fans were disappointed after their 1-1 draw with Al Ahli, the other results kept the former champions at the top despite the fact that a win would have put their coach's mind to rest.

Jihad Abdul Mun'em scored for Al Wihdat, but Nart Yadaaj delighted Ahli fans with the equaliser in the final minute.

Al Wihdat owe a lot to Al Qadissieh's Mustafa Adam who secured his team's unexpected win over Al Ramtha.

Al Arabi's 3-2 win over Al Hussein was also a delightful surprise for Al Wihdat.

Although Al Hussein took the lead early in the 7th minute and did not expect to be stunned by three consecutive Arabi goals from Mohammad Alawneh and Aymen Al Omari, the team did not have the chance to equalise after Mohammad Shweier added their second goal.

Shabab Al Hussein scored a morale boosting 2-1 win over Al Karmel to slightly improve their record, however both teams will accompany Al Jeel and a still undecided team back to the second division.

Standings after 20th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts.
Wihdat	20	13	7	—	26	4	33
Ramtha	20	13	5	2	41	12	31
Faisali	20	11	7	2	38	9	29
Hussein	20	13	2	5	48	23	28
Jazireh	20	10	5	5	29	18	25
Ahli	20	7	6	7	26	28	20
Kufroum	20	9	2	9	28	31	20
Arabi	20	7	5	8	26	30	19
Qadissieh	20	6	6	8	23	24	18
Shabab Al Hussein*	20	2	4	14	19	42	8
Karmel*	20	1	4	15	13	50	6
Jeel*	20	1	1	18	11	57	3

* Relegated to 2nd division.

Mama Juanita to open at Hotel Inter-Continental

Final preparation are underway at the Hotel Inter-Continental for the grand opening of Mama Juanita, the latest of Mexican Restaurants in Amman. It is expected to open its doors to the public in the second half of January.

Mama Juanita is the first authentic Mexican Restaurant in town, with its own Mexican staff specially flown in from

Mexico City. Amongst the staff is chef Rene, who brings with him an extensive experience in Mexican cooking as well as Mr. Jose, bar tender, who will be preparing a wide variety of real Mexican cocktails.

Mr. Jacco Klip, Food & Beverage Manager at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan,

says, "Most of the food ingredients, dinner services and special Mexican cooking utensils were flown in from Mexico... We have prepared for our visitors a well balanced menu guaranteed to please every taste." He adds, "Every day of the week, Mama Juanita will have a different promotion, which will be advertised in the press shortly."

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American Pronunciation	Levels 5/6	GMAT	Level 6
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Infighting on economy jolts Rabin government

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government, its popular support severely eroded, met on Sunday against a backdrop of bitter infighting over the economy and the fate of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Recent opinion polls show Mr. Rabin's ruling Labour Party, whose parliamentary backing for Middle East peace moves rests on a slim majority, has been hit hard by government economic policy, especially a capital gains tax.

The cabinet discussed at length Finance Minister Abraham Shohat's plan to cut the budget and pass savings on to taxpayers. Bank of Israel head Yaacov Frenkel later emerged from the meeting and told reporters the cuts had been approved.

The \$240 million budget reduction was approved after a major battle which saw nine ministers warn the country was heading for "economic disaster".

Seven of the 17 ministers voted against the cut, which affects several ministries and was called to cover an adjustment in tax rates.

Parliament approved a \$49 billion budget in December, including a 7.9 per cent increase in defence spending.

The reduction sparked friction within the cabinet highlighted by a leaked report from Police Minister Moshe Shohat. He warned the government was "hurting full-speed towards an economic disaster while the economic leadership seems unaware of where it is heading."

Mr. Shohat, who wants to be finance minister according to Israel Rabin, said the public was dissatisfied and predicted that higher social security payments "threaten to bring the disaffection of the middle class to the boil."

Inflation reached 14.5 per cent in Israel last year compared with 11.2 per cent in 1993, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced.

The government had predicted eight per cent at the start of 1994.

Before Sunday's meeting, ministers traded verbal blows prompted by media accounts of the report by Mr. Shohat to Mr. Rabin containing scathing criticism of Mr. Shohat and other economic officials.

Ministers of the leftist Meretz, Labour's largest coalition partner, have also demanded that Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Zion reveal plans on expanding West Bank Jewish settlements, something Meretz says could wreck peace talks

with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

But prolonged wrangling over the budget delayed the discussion on settlements, cabinet sources said.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid of Meretz, a senior peace negotiator, said Mr. Shohat and other cabinet critics of treasury policies were doing the work of the hardline Likud opposition.

"The impression here is that some Labour Party ministers have decided to bring down the government," Mr. Sarid said.

"The right and settlers who want the government weakened couldn't have wished themselves more enthusiastic collaborators," he told army radio. "The truth is that if I were prime minister, I would throw all these guys down the stairs."

The report by Mr. Shohat, prompted by media headlines in Sunday newspapers.

The report was quoted as describing economic policies as "confused... shot from the hip" and a result of "leadership failure by ministers responsible for the economy."

Israelis had hoped for economic dividends from a peace process that went into high gear when Mr. Rabin's centre-left government came to power in mid-1992.

Crown Prince, Princess Sarvath return home

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath returned home Sunday after a several-day private visit to the United Kingdom. Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath were received at the airport by His Majesty King Hussein. They were also received by several Princes and Princesses, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qassem, the King's advisors, the Crown Prince's advisor, the director of the Crown Prince's office, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the directors of the General Intelligence and Public Security Departments, senior Royal Court officials and the British ambassador to Jordan and his wife.



Jordan calls on Israel to resolve refugee problem

CAIRO (Petra) — Jordan on Sunday told a meeting by Arab countries bosting Palestinian refugees that Israel was responsible for the delay in implementing U.N. resolutions and in perpetuating the sufferings of the refugees.

"The international community should shoulder its responsibilities and exert pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories and allow the refugees to be repatriated," Asem Ghosheh, Jordan's delegate, told the meeting.

Mr. Ghosheh said the sustainability of peace requires implementation of the peace accords on the ground so that justice and honorable peace can be achieved.

"He called on Israel to halt its Jewish settlement programmes in the occupied lands and end its human rights violations to ensure the success of the peace process."

Mr. Ghosheh, head of the Department of Palestinian Affairs, said the Palestine question was Jordan's main concern in the region and the Kingdom would pursue efforts to alleviate the Palestinian people's suffering by all possible means.

He said Jordan calls on the host countries represented at the meeting to discuss the activities and the services offered to the refugees by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

He stressed the need for the agency to continue its services in all its fields of operations until the refugee problem is resolved.

Dozens dead as Kurdish clashes flare anew in northern Iraq

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Fierce clashes have flared anew for control of the main town in Kurdish-held northern Iraq, leaving "dozens of dead" and shattering a three-day lull, Kurdish officials said Sunday.

Officials in Tehran said the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Massud Barzani launched a new offensive on Saturday against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of Jalal Talabani, taking control of several areas near Erbil.

In London, a PUK official acknowledged the KDP had taken "some pockets" in the suburbs of Erbil, the seat of an Iraqi Kurdish "parliament," but he said the main thrust of the assault was repelled.

The KDP had left behind "dozens of dead" on the ground, Sami Shorash told the London-based Arabic newspaper Al Hayat, without giving casualty figures for his own group.

"Fierce fighting is going on, both sides have reported victims," said the Kurdish Information Centre, also based in London.

A spokesman for the independent group, contacted by telephone from Cyprus, said Mr. Barzani's fighters had captured three villages near Erbil: Keshnizam, Hasarok and Ceman.

Mr. Barzani himself supervised the assault, other Kurdish sources told Al Hayat.

PUK radio and television stations, meanwhile, called on Mr. Talabani's fighters to mobilize in defence of Erbil. An artillery duel has also broken out in the Shaqlawa region to the east, which the KDP took over from PUK last month.

Al Hayat said Mr. Barzani refused to abide by a ceasefire brokered on January 8 by the Iraqi National Congress (INC) opposition alliance unless Mr. Talabani withdrew his forces from Erbil.

The PUK captured the city in late December. Ahmad Chalabi, head of the INC, has broken off his mediation in protest at the renewed bloodshed after a full since Wednesday, the newspaper added.

Fighting which erupted on Dec. 24 claimed between 100 and 500 lives, according to different Kurdish sources. There has been no independent estimate on the overall toll.

Iraq's ambassador to Ankara said thousands of civilians died in the month of fighting which caused an exodus from north Iraq.

Ambassador Rafi Al Tikriti told Turkey's Anatolian news agency thousands of civilians had been killed in Erbil alone.

Mr. Tikriti said there was "a heavy migration" of civilians east to Iran and south towards territory held by Iraq government forces.

Turkey said last week more than 500 Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas and civilians had died in the PUK-KDP feud.

Mr. Tikriti said Turkey's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrilla group, which has bases in northern Iraq, was aiding the PUK.

"There is a close relationship between the PKK and Talabani," he told Anatolian. The Turkish Foreign Ministry has warned the two Iraqi Kurdish groups not to cooperate with the PKK.

The Foreign Ministry held meeting last week with the Ankara representatives of the PUK and KDP to work out a ceasefire. The PUK says the clashes started after a dispute over the payment of taxes to the Kurdish administration in Erbil.

The PUK and KDP, sharing power in northern Iraq since 1992, vie for supremacy although they have fought together against the forces of President Saddam Hussein, who crushed a Kurdish rebellion after Baghdad's Gulf war defeat in 1991.

Kurdish-held territory in northern Iraq is protected from government troops by a Western allied air force based in southern Turkey.

The PUK is stronger in the southern part of the Kurdish area, while the KDP's main base is to the north near Turkey.

COLUMN

Britons favour William, not Charles, as king

LONDON (R) — Most people in Britain want Prince William, not his father Prince Charles, to become king, according to a Sunday newspaper poll. "Prince Charles' popularity has fallen to such a low that 54 per cent of people now want his son to inherit the crown if he reaches the age of 18 before the queen dies," the Sunday Express said. Forty-two per cent supported Prince Charles and four per cent were undecided. A majority of the 1,000 people questioned in the ICM survey also said that Princess Anne, Prince Charles' younger sister, would make a better monarch. The poll, which was taken after it was announced earlier this week that the prince's long-time mistress Camilla Parker Bowles and her husband would divorce. Prince Charles and his wife Princess Diana separated two years ago after more than a decade of marriage. Their eldest son, Prince William, will be 18 in six years time, but Queen Elizabeth has given no indication that she will abdicate in favour of her son or grandson. "The long-term prospects for the monarchy are still grim. More than one in four now think the monarch will go in the next 10 years and 29 per cent say they would be better off without a royal family now," the newspaper said.

U.K. minister gets animal rights threat

LONDON (R) — Animal rights activists campaigning against the export of live calves from Britain to continental Europe have threatened the life of a minister who allowed animals from his farm to be shipped, Sunday newspaper said. The Mail on Sunday, quoting a senior police source, said Agriculture Minister William Waldegrave received a letterbooby-trapped with razor blades at his home. "Those close to Mr. Waldegrave are now extremely concerned over his safety as he has become the number one target of a group described by an aide as 'the most dangerous fanatics, after the IRA (Irish Republican Army),' the newspaper said. Mr. Waldegrave has come under fire from animal rights protesters for the involvement of his family's dairy farm in the export of calves which are crated up to be slaughtered for veal meat. The reported threat is the latest episode in an increasingly violent campaign against the export of live calves which began two weeks ago when demonstrators besieged the port of Shoreham in southern England. Protesters have clashed repeatedly in several areas of the country. Police arrested five people Saturday near the docks in Plymouth, southern England, as they escorted 16 trucks with calves and sheep past a protesting crowd of 40 people. On Friday, activists prevented a convoy of lorries carrying calves from entering Swansea Airport in Wales when a protester got underneath the first vehicle and chained himself to the axle.

Malawi ministries' phones cut for not paying bills

BLANTYRE, Malawi (R) — Malawi's post office has cut off parliament's telephones and those of many government ministries for not paying their bills. Posts and Telecommunications Corporation chief accountant Eddison Chidzankwa told Reuters Saturday that customers were warned last month that services would be disconnected unless the bills were paid by Dec. 31. Government sources said the entire capital bill area housing government ministries in the administrative capital Lilongwe had been cut off. Parliament in Zomba, northeast of Blantyre, was also without phones for non-payment of bills. Mr. Chidzankwa said that by last October, government ministries and offices owed about \$3.0 million and private companies about \$1.0 million. "We are going ahead with disconnections until the total bill is cleared," Mr. Chidzankwa said, adding he had already recovered \$1.0 million in a week. Only health institutions were being spared because they provided essential services.

U.N. completes evacuation from Mogadishu compound

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — U.N. troops and civilians were completing their retreat from their sprawling compound in Mogadishu to the airport Sunday as warring sub-clans fought with heavy weapons in the streets of the capital.

Tanks accompanied the convoys setting out from the 33-hectare compound, the former U.S. embassy, leaving behind a 950-strong Pakistani security battalion to deter looters as contractors remove equipment.

In the Bermuda neighbourhood militias of the Murusade and Abgal factions of the Hawiye clan were battling with mortars, recoilless rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine-guns.

That fighting — which was not impeding the evacuation of the compound — resumed Saturday after a nine-day lull and increased in intensity Sunday as clan elders met to try to cement a peace accord to follow a ceasefire agreed on Jan. 5.

Fighting between the two sub-clans in Bermuda and in the Medina district of south Mogadishu left close to 200 dead and some 700 wounded, between early December and early January.

It followed the defection of Murusade leader Mohammad Qanyare Afrah from the

camp of warlord Ali Mahdi, Mohammad, who controls north Mogadishu, to that of General Mohammed Farah Aided, who controls most of the south of the city.

Medina — beside the airport — was calm Sunday because the Abgals have chased the Murusade out of the area, leaving it an enclave loyal to Mr. Ali Mahdi.

Medina military commander Musa Sudi Yalaho made it clear Sunday that his men are likely to fight Gen. Aided's militias for control of the airport.

Speaking at his headquarters deep inside the battered district, he told AFP: "It is my responsibility to run the airport. We consider it our property, so we shall defend it if Aided's men try to loot it."

Officials of General Aided's Somali National Alliance have said that both the airport and the port are in their area, and that they will run both facilities after the U.N. troops leave Somalia by the time their mandate expires on March 31.

Some efforts are continuing to try to constitute joint committees to run both the port and the airport.

Yalaho said his militias would respect the U.S. embassy compound as U.S. property, but added that "we may react" if Gen. Aided's

militias occupy it and used the area to attack the Abgals.

U.N. staff freed

A group of foreign staff of the United Nations mission in Somalia were freed on Sunday after negotiations with gunmen who held them hostage on Saturday, U.N. sources said.

The kidnappers had demanded money that they said they were owed by the United Nations. It was not clear on what grounds they had agreed to free the hostages.

Among those held was the United Nations' chief transport officer, Ray Botham. He was back at work by midday on Sunday, apparently unharmed.

Somali sources said only five people had been held but U.N. military spokesman Major Zubair Chattha on Saturday put the number at 15.

A Somali source said: "They removed the gunmen from the area. It is all normal."

Maj. Chattha said former U.N. Somali staff, demanding what they said were overdue payments, entered a U.N. residential building near Mogadishu airport and seized the foreign employees.

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Air force fails in Iraq coup — Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iraqi air force officers mounted a coup against President Saddam Hussein but he escaped assassins' bullets near one of his palaces around Baghdad, the official Iranian news agency reported Sunday. IRNA, quoting Iraqi sources in Amman, said 14 air force officers were arrested and their alleged ringleader, General Mohammad Mazloum Al Dalimi, was "savagely" executed. The coup was foiled after gunmen failed to hit the Iraqi president near Al Ramadi palace, it said. But IRNA gave no date for the failed coup, and there was no immediate comment on the report from Baghdad or the Iraqi opposition in exile. The Iraqi air force was devastated in the 1991 Gulf war for Kuwait, with many warplanes flown to safety in neighbouring Iran, which itself fought a 1980-1988 war against Iraq.

Nasreen's trial put back for third time

DHAKA (AFP) — The trial of exiled Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen was put back Sunday for the third time after the presiding Magistrate fell ill. Idris Rahman, a lawyer for the writer, said Assistant Chief Metropolitan Magistrate A.K.M. Kamaluddin, who was scheduled to hear the case, was sick and had set Jan. 23 as the new date. The defence also submitted an application saying the magistrate's court "is not competent to proceed further without (the) sanction" of the government as ordered by the high court. Last Tuesday, a two-judge high court bench rejected a request by Ms. Nasreen's lawyers that her trial in absentia for blaspheming Islam be dismissed. But the judges ordered the magistrate to halt the action until the prosecution gets formal approval for the trial from the interior ministry. Senior legal sources said the magistrates court could also ask for the approval. They said it was difficult to say if the sanction would be ready by Jan. 23.

Dudayev's son buried following death in battle

MOSCOW (AFP) — The elder son of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev was buried on Saturday after dying of wounds received in the Chechen conflict, the ITAR-TASS news agency said here Sunday. It quoted the chairman of Chechenya's council of elders, Said Achmed Adivov. The chairman did not specify where Ovlur Dudayev, aged 23, was buried. He was injured on Dec. 26 during an attack on Russian forces near Argun, east of Grozny. Dzhokhar

Dudayev has led a month-long fight by Chechens against intervention by Russian forces to crush Chechenya's three-year-old secession bid. The Chechen leader, who is married to an ethnic Russian, has one surviving son, and a daughter.

Iran scales down ties with Norway

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has decided to scale down its diplomatic relations with Norway in protest at Oslo's "support" for Iranian opposition groups and British writer Salman Rushdie, a weekly newspaper said here Sunday. A Foreign Ministry official told Kayhan-e-Havai that Iran would "continue to maintain relations with Norway at a reduced level until Oslo changes its attitude towards" the Islamic republic. Iran's ambassador to Norway Abdo Rahim Gavahi was recalled earlier this month for hinting in a letter to the Norwegian foreign ministry that his government could change its policy on the death sentence issued against Mr. Rushdie. The late founder of the Islamic republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, condemned the author to death in 1989, saying his novel "The Satanic Verses" had blasphemed against Islam. Since Ayatollah Khomeini's death Iranian leaders have upheld the sentence despite strong criticism from Western countries.

Kuwait should study quake risk — scientist

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait should respond to recent earth tremors by monitoring seismic activity more closely to assess the risk to residents and midfields, a scientist said in remarks published on Sunday. "The populace should be forewarned that Kuwait could experience more tremors," U.S.-educated Kuwait University geophysicist Fiyral Bourabee was quoted as saying by Al-Sayess newspaper and the English-language Arab Times. Kuwait has recorded several tremors in recent weeks and newspapers have reported heightened concern over safety among residents. Oil experts say no earth tremor damage to oilfields has been recorded since the start of commercial production 50 years ago. In late December Kuwait scale. Residents recorded a series of tremors this month although no official measurements have been published. Al Watan newspaper said earlier this month it had received angry calls from residents demanding the government investigate the tremors and publish the results.

Board chairman and fired editor of Sawt Al Shaab trade charges

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) is looking into the reasons behind the firing of the chief editor of Sawt Al Shaab Arabic daily, Abdul Salam Al Tarawneh, but the company's chairman of the board, Abdul Hai Al Majali, says that any effort to reinstate the editor would be futile.

JPA President Sulaiman Qudus declined comment on the incident beyond saying that the association had received a complaint from Mr. Tarawneh and would follow up the issue with the concerned authorities.

Informal sources also said that the government, which owns 80 per cent of the paper, is also looking into the incident.

But Mr. Majali said the decision to dismiss Mr. Tarawneh, which was taken last week, was final and it had the approval of all members of the board of the financially-troubled newspaper.

Mr. Tarawneh told the Jordan Times that his dismissal from the paper was prompted by his rejection of managerial intervention in the editorial policy of the paper, adding that Mr. Majali unilaterally took the decision to fire him without the consent of the board.

He said troubles between him and Mr. Majali started when the chairman began attempting to have articles that "unfairly and unprofessionally criticise Jordanian political figures" published in the paper.

Mr. Tarawneh, who took over the editorship of the paper in July last year, said he refused to publish such articles which Mr. Majali



Abdul Hai Majali



Abdul Salam Tarawneh

wanted to have printed under false names.

The incident that brought the confrontation to the decision to fire Mr. Tarawneh was the editor's refusal to publish an editorial stating that former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali was to form the new government despite strong reports that Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker was to head the new cabinet, Mr. Tarawneh said.

He said the chairman of the board, who is also general manager of the paper, wanted other articles extremely critical of Jordanian personalities to be published in the paper under the signature of the "editor," even though they were written by other people, including an editorial consultant who was hired by Mr. Majali against the will of Mr. Tarawneh.

Mr. Majali, a brother of former Prime Minister Majali, also tried to use "the power of people outside the paper to influence the policy of the paper," said Mr. Tarawneh.

Mr. Tarawneh showed this reporter an article critical of a parliamentarian and signed by a "citizen from Karak" as an example of the articles

which, he said, Abdul Hai Majali wanted to run in the paper without the names of their writers.

"I couldn't have allowed such articles to be published, especially that they are not signed by the people who wrote them," said Mr. Tarawneh.

Mr. Majali rejected these charges, saying the decision to fire the editor was prompted by his failure to cooperate with the management and the decline in the performance of the publication.

He said he had asked Mr. Tarawneh in July to reorganise the cadres of the newspaper, which is 80 per cent owned by the government, but Mr. Tarawneh ignored the request as well as a similar one made in December.

Mr. Majali said the refusal of the editor to cooperate with the management resulted in a decline in the performance of the debt-plagued paper.

That, he said, prompted the board to take the decision to fire Mr. Tarawneh.

But Mr. Majali said he asked the board of directors to entrust him with solving

(Continued on page 7)